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NAPOLEON

AND

HIS TIMES,

BY

Caulaincourt

CAULINCOURT,

DUKE OF VICENZA.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

PHILADELPHIA:
E. L. CAREY & A. HART.
.....
1838.

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NAPOLEON

AND

HIS TIMES.

CHAPTER I.

Visit of Napoleon and Maria Louisa to Holland—Fêtes in honor of their presence—Accidental meeting between the Authoress and the Duke de Vicenza—A remarkable coincidence—Intellectual organisation of Napoleon—Duroc's remarks on Napoleon's mental superiority—The battle of Jena—Napoleon's manner of addressing his troops—The wounded cuirassier—Napoleon frequently accused of want of feeling—His remark on hearing of Moreau's death—His belief in fatalism.

On a fine warm morning in September, 1826, I was seated in one of the shadiest recesses of those lovely woodlands which skirt Plombières, on the side near the Stanislas Fountain. I had a book in my hand, but I was not reading: my thoughts were dreamingly wandering back to a glorious period of the past. Numerous pedestrians paced along the little path which intersected the wood, and near which I was sitting; but they did not rouse me from my reverie: they flitted like shadows before my eyes, without in any way fixing my attention.

I sat with my head resting on my hand, and with my eyes cast down, in a state of complete

abstraction. My capricious fancy unfolded before me the magnificent basin of Antwerp, the port, and the spacious dock-yards. Two fine vessels, gaily decked out, were to be launched that day, the one in the morning, and the other in the evening.

Napoleon was about to present to the people of the Netherlands, the grand-niece of their celebrated Christina; and a series of truly regal fêtes were to take place in the principal towns of conquered, though not subjugated, Belgium.

The cathedral clock struck four as we alighted from our carriage at the Tête de Flandre. We got into a small boat, which landed us at the port of Antwerp, where all was movement and bustle, though the sun had scarcely risen. The sky appeared dull and cloudy. A *Commissaire de Marine*, in full uniform, who was issuing orders with a busy and important air, looked up, and, observing that the clouds were becoming more and more gloomy, his countenance expressed great anxiety. Addressing himself to an old soldier, who was occupied in tying some cords, he said, "Maringo, the wind is southwest; I am afraid we shall have some rain. That will be confoundedly vexing."

"Pooh!" replied the soldier, with an indescribable air of confidence, "*he* always carries the Sun of Austerlitz in his pocket. What does *he* care for a few clouds!"

"Monsieur," said I, addressing the *Commissaire*, "at what hour is the first ship to be launched?"

"Their Majesties will be here at six o'clock. Time and tide wait for no one."

"If they should wait for *him*," said the soldier, in a sort of muttering tone, "it would be nothing more than their duty."

We could not repress our laughter at this strange remark.

"There, my good man," said I, presenting to him a five-franc piece; "take this, and drink the Emperor's health."

"Thank you, Madame," said he; "I would drink the Emperor's health with all my heart. But the truth is," added he, significantly scratching his ear, "that Maringo——Maringo knows his own failing. If I begin to drink the Emperor's health I shall not have done whilst a single sou of the five-franc piece remains; and that will not do —especially after *he* did me the honor to notice me yesterday; 'What do you do here, my brave fellow?" said *he*. Now, if I were to drink my hundred sous, I should certainly be turned to the right about, and marched to the Salle de Police. I would not for worlds that our beloved Emperor should have the least cause to reproach me."

Napoleon possessed a power of fascination which inspired his brave and devoted soldiers with the singular belief that each of them individually was an object of attention and consideration to their sovereign.

The places assigned to me and my friends were exactly facing the imperial tent. We saw the Emperor arrive. His youthful consort, Maria Louisa, was the object of his assiduous attention. Napoleon's countenance beamed with love and happiness; and he seemed to be proud of showing the Empress to his subjects. The ceremony of the launch commenced. A thundering discharge of artillery from the fort, together with the guns on board the ships in the river, saluted the new vessel as she majestically glided into the Scheldt. At that moment, the Emperor, whose countenance appeared to bright-

en up with increased animation at the firing of the guns, passed his arm round the waist of his trembling wife, and drew her close to him, as if to protect her from a danger which had no existence. Three years later, that wife forsook her husband, and accepted the protection of others. But, thought I, Maria Louisa is not a Frenchwoman: this reflection soothed my indignant feelings.

I now awoke from my reverie of recollections. I mechanically raised my head, and I observed a gentleman slowly ascending the sloping path near the spot where I was seated, and from time to time stopping to rest himself. As he approached I was struck with his appearance. His figure was slender and pliant, and he had an air of youth, in spite of his premature wrinkles and his pale and attenuated countenance.

A thought, as it were a reflection of the past, suddenly darted across my mind. That person, said I within myself, is like the apparition of one who is still fresh in my recollection. But when last I saw him, he held his head proudly erect; his figure, which now appears bowed by infirmity, was then upright, and a rich military uniform accorded with his graceful and gallant bearing. His whole aspect denoted energy and courage; his look bespoke the confidence of a man occupying one of those high positions, to fall from which must be almost at the expense of life.

I beheld before me the Grand Equerry of the Empire, the Duke de Vicenza.

As I gazed upon him, a feeling of melancholy took possession of my mind, and tears, which I could not repress, overflowed my eyes.

"Mademoiselle," said the Duke, addressing

my femme de chambre, who was sitting at work near me, "does this path lead straight to the Stanislas Fountain?"

"Yes, Monsieur le Duc," replied I, rising hastily from my seat; though I was at the time very ill and feeble.

He advanced a few steps towards me, and with that grace of manner for which all will admit he was eminently distinguished, he said—

"Madame, have I the honor to be known to you?"

"Yes," I replied; "all the golden dreams of my youth refer to the glories of the Empire. Of late years I have unremittingly deplored its disasters; and the devoted loyalty of the Duke de Vicenza is in my mind inseparably connected with the name of Napoleon!"

We entered cordially into conversation. We revived old recollections. The great actors in the heroic drama had been mutually known to us. Our sympathies reverted warmly and vividly to the past. From that day our gossipings were interminable.

When I met the Duke de Vicenza at Plombières, in 1826, he had grown exceedingly thin. His hair was almost entirely gray, and his altered features bore evidence of the poignant mental suffering he had endured. Instead of a few years, it seemed as though half a century had passed over Napoleon's brilliant equerry. That dreadful and incurable disease, a cancer in the stomach, was rapidly shortening the thread of his existence. Doctor Broussais had advised him to take the waters of Plombières; but the duke made little or no trial of their efficacy. Life was a burden to him. That existence once so radiant with glory and happiness, was now overclouded

by painful recollections. "There is no longer any room for me in France," I have often heard him say.

The two months I passed at Plombières were to me a sort of compensation for one of those intervals of trial in which we sometimes imagine ourselves forsaken by Heaven—in which we ask ourselves what crime we are doomed to expiate by unremitting suffering—when we pray that each succeeding night may be our last, whilst every morning brings a renewal of pain and anguish. In this pitiable condition, death, which we can neither fly from nor overtake, is ever present in our view.

I had lingered through three long years in a state of languor between life and death. My resignation and fortitude were almost exhausted. My medical attendants ordered me to travel; and I, weary of confinement, and of those monotonous amusements which had for a time afforded some little diversion during lingering nights and days, joyfully availed myself of the permission afforded me, to suffer in other places, to see other objects, and to inhale a change of air. One of my relations, Colonel R——, offered to be my escort. We travelled by short stages, and the journey was so long, that Plombières seemed to me to be at the further extremity of the world. On our arrival we found the town full of company; and I was obliged to take up my abode at the Tête d'Or, the hotel at which our postillion stopped.

My feeble condition prevented me from either making or receiving visits; and I lived perfectly tranquil and secluded in the gay and fashionable town. There were at that time six thousand visitors in Plombières. Arrivals and departures

succeeded each other continually; and the excitement, bustle, and animation, doubtless afforded agreeable excitement to invalids less afflicted than myself.

Disabled as I was from participating in the amusements of the place, I regarded my unexpected meeting with the Duke de Vicenza as a singular instance of good fortune. The duke also was suffering severely from illness; and Colonel R—— and myself were the only persons with whom he associated. We met regularly every morning at the Crucifix Fountain, and we afterwards made a ramble of a few hours in the outskirts of the town. I used to ride on one of the wretched little horses of the country, whilst the gentlemen accompanied me on foot.

The duke lodged in a house adjoining our hotel. He occupied the apartments in which the Empress Josephine resided when the balcony of the first floor window gave way and the Empress and two of her ladies were precipitated into the street.

What remarkable coincidences sometimes fix our attention! Twenty years after the accident to which I have just alluded, the Duke de Vicenza reposed in the same bedchamber which had so often resounded with the name of Napoleon, pronounced by the sweet accents of Josephine's voice.

It was now the month of September; the evenings were beginning to lengthen, and, with some few exceptions, we passed them all in the society of the Duke de Vicenza. He usually came to us about seven o'clock; and often, when the great town clock struck twelve, we expressed our wonder at the rapidity with which the hours had flown.

The duke felt little inclination to sleep, and Colonel R—— and myself were never weary of listening to his conversation, which was always replete with interesting facts. My questions, and his complaisance in answering them, were alike inexhaustible.

The Duke de Vicenza had been the confidant and the bosom friend of Napoleon. He had been intrusted with the most important diplomatic functions, and he always corresponded directly with the Emperor. There was no intermediary between them. Their correspondence was the communion of thought between man and man—the private instructions of a sovereign to his trustworthy and intelligent friend. The Duke de Vicenza was, of all men, best qualified to describe Napoleon; he possessed a profound knowledge of his character, and was acquainted with all those little shades of feeling which are imperceptible to common observers. To his ministers, his generals, and to all who approached him, the Emperor maintained the character of the monarch; to Caulincourt only he was Napoleon. He might be good or ill-humored, merry or sad, angry or pleased, but he was always sincere, always himself.

The reason was, that the Duke de Vicenza was a man distinguished amidst all the crowd of courtiers. He possessed an intrinsic superiority a natural dignity— he was gifted with a certain elegance of manner and language, which elevated him, as it were, above his equals, and commanded the admiration of every one. The coldness with which I have seen him reproached was inherent in his proud and independent nature. He had a perfect consciousness of his own superiority but his exquisite good breeding tempered any

little asperities to which the gravity of his manner might give birth.

After an animated argument, the Emperor once said to the Duke de Vicenza: "You are a bar of iron—an absolute bar of iron; there is no bending you but by thrusting you into the fire."

"Well, sire, I frankly confess that I am a bar of iron with your Majesty more than with any other person in the world."

"Ah! indeed!"

"It must inevitably be so, sire; for when I contradict your Majesty, be assured that nothing but the most decided conviction of being in the right could induce me to do so."

I had remarked that the Duke de Vicenza, when speaking of the Emperor, never omitted those respectful forms of expression which he had been accustomed to employ when personally addressing his sovereign. There was a delicate feeling of propriety in this observance; it was an homage rendered to illustrious misfortune. I one day mentioned to the duke how sensibly I felt this mark of good taste.

"My recollections," said he, "are a sanctuary in which I have preserved, in all its warmth and purity, the exalted sentiment which has survived death. I rarely speak of the Emperor, and never to those who do not understand my feelings."

The Duke de Vicenza cherished ardent but not blind admiration for Napoleon. He was himself gifted with keen, discriminating powers of judgment, and his enthusiasm for the Emperor was based on his own knowledge of Napoleon's mental superiority.

"I have known," said he to us, "nearly all the crowned heads of the present age—all our

illustrious contemporaries. I have lived with several of those great historical characters on a footing of confidence and intimacy quite distinct from my diplomatic duties. I have had every opportunity of comparing and judging; but it is impossible to institute any comparison between Napoleon and any other man; those who say otherwise did not know him.

"That noble-hearted fellow, Duroc, once said to me with his characteristic simplicity of manner—'The Emperor, my dear Caulincourt, appears to me to be endowed with a variety of mental faculties, any one of which would suffice to distinguish a man from the multitude. For example, he is the greatest captain of the age—a sovereign, whose ministers are merely his clerks—a statesman who directs the whole business of the country, and superintends every branch of the service; and yet this Colossus of gigantic proportions can descend with wonderful facility to the most trivial details of private life. He can regulate the expenditure of his household, as he regulates the finances of the empire.' Duroc's remarks were just.

"Some persons have applied a silly and incorrect epithet to the devoted friends of the Emperor. Napoleon had no *Seides;* he had fanatical admirers, but their fanaticism was founded on conviction.

"As to myself, whenever I take a retrospective glance at the past, it seems as though some rays of the meteor diffused a light over my memory.

"On the day of the battle of Jena, the Emperor sent for me about three o'clock in the morning. He had not been in bed. I found him irritable and impatient. Some orders which he

had despatched on the preceding evening had not been executed. As yet all the arrangements were in an advanced state of progress; but the apprehension that any delay might ensue rendered the Emperor anxious and impatient. Every moment staff-officers were entering with reports of the missons on which they had been sent during the night. They were required to express themselves very laconically, for the Emperor could not endure prolixity or hesitation. The Prince of Neufchatel might certainly have spared him the fatigue of receiving these officers; but the Emperor always wished to direct the details of his military plans. His movements were so ordered that it would have been difficult for any but himself to form a comprehensive idea of the whole. The fate of battle depended on the intelligence and strict punctuality of those who had orders to execute. The Emperor was therefore greatly irritated when his calculations were thwarted by any neglect or omission.

"'Sire,' said I, when I saw him on the morning of the battle of Bautzen, 'we shall have a hard day's work. It is now only four o'clock; your Majesty has had no rest ——"

"—'Impossible, Caulincourt. I have my plan here,' said he, passing his hand lightly across his forehead, 'but there is yet nothing—nothing marked on my maps. Rustan, go and fetch Dalbe. Desire Dalbe to come to me immediately."

"A map of the ground chosen as the field of battle had been drawn the day before. Leaning on the table on which it was spread out, the Emperor traced his plan rapidly, but with the utmost precision.

"'Now that will do—you understand, Caulincourt! You have all my arrangements in your head. Mount a horse—go and inspect the ground, and select for me a spot whence I may command a view of the field of battle. I shall be on the field at six o'clock.'

"He threw himself on his camp bed, and in a few moments he sunk into a profound sleep.

"The action commenced at nine in the morning, and at two in the afternoon the conflict was still maintained with unabated fury. The victory was so obstinately disputed on both sides that it was impossible for any one to foresee the issue of the engagement. The Emperor, who, with his staff, was stationed on a height, anxiously watched the movements of the two armies. Suddenly he quitted his position, spurred his horse, and set off at full gallop. Proceeding to the right of the field of battle, he mounted an eminence which was completely uncovered. The ground was furrowed by the enemy's balls. A battalion of grenadiers had been posted there to do the duty of *tirailleurs*.

"'Dalbe! the maps—the maps!' exclaimed the Emperor alighting from his horse.

"The maps were spread upon the ground. He examined them, traced out several evolutions with his finger, then took a telescope and stood for some time gazing on the scene of slaughter around us. On every side the artillery kept up a terrific fire, and the action was hotly maintained at every point. The Emperor, whose intrepid calmness did not for a moment forsake him amidst this frightful devastation, alternately examined his maps and surveyed the field of battle. At length, laying down his telescope, he said—

'Gentlemen, the battle is gained. In a week we shall sleep at Berlin.'

"These words were truly magical. They were calculated to rouse the coldest imagination. The fact was, that at that moment none of us could have formed an opinion of the probable loss or gain of the battle, the fate of which was not really decided until more than four days after. Victory was ours, but it was purchased at the price of the most heroic efforts.

"I wish," said the Duke de Vicenza, whose countenance at this moment glowed, as it were, with a reflected light of happiness, "I wish I could retrace to you all the details of this simple anecdote, which so well portrays Napoleon's genius. The Emperor had no sooner uttered the words, *the battle is gained, in a week we shall sleep at Berlin*, than the soldiers who had gradually approached now gathered round him so closely that he had scarcely room to mount his horse.

"'Fall back! fall back!' exclaimed the officers of the staff.

"'Let them advance! Let them advance!' said the Emperor. "They shall march with me to Berlin; I will not go without them.'

"The air now resounded with joyful and enthusiastic acclamations. The men waved their caps, and shouted '*Vive l'Empereur!—On to Berlin with the Emperor!*' There was not one of these brave fellows who did not wish he had ten lives instead of one to sacrifice for Napoleon.

"It is impossible by description to convey any idea of the grace, I may almost say the coquetry, of Napoleon's manner when he addressed his troops. There was an irresistible charm in the tone of his voice when he wished to please

those to whom he spoke; and that was always his wish when he addressed himself to his veteran *moustaches*.

"I remember that on the evening of the battle of Bautzen he passed an hospital wagon. It was a horrid spectacle:—a mountain of amputated arms and legs presented itself to our eyes. A cuirassier of the old guard, stretched on the ground, was struggling with two adjutants who were endeavoring to hold him, whilst Larrey was preparing to amputate the limb of the wounded man, whose thigh bone had been dreadfully shattered by the bursting of a bomb-shell.

"'Be quiet! be quiet! coward!' exclaimed Larrey, impatiently.

"But the poor fellow still resisted; and the tears run down his cheeks, which were blackened by gunpowder.

"'What is the matter?' inquired the Emperor, riding up to the spot where the cuirassier lay. 'How is this?' continued he; 'surely a brave *moustache* like you are not afraid of a cut?"

"'No, your Majesty, I am not afraid of a cut; but this is a sort of cut that a man may die of—and there is Catherine and her four little ones.—You know the *cantinière* of the 2d cuirassiers?'

"'What of her?' said the Emperor.

"'She is my wife, your Majesty, and we have four children—and if I should die'—continued he, striving to repress the sobs which almost choked his utterance.

"'Well, and what if you should die, my good fellow? am I not here?'

"'True, your Majesty—I am very foolish.—Well, doctor, if it must be so, cut off my limb. God bless the Emperor!'

"'Larrey,' said the Emperor, 'perform this

operation in the most careful manner; and in a month hence let him be entered at the Hospital of the Invalides, in Paris.'

"'Vive l'Empereur!' exclaimed the wounded cuirassier; and his brother invalids in the hospital wagon joined in the shout.

"It has been alleged that the Emperor was not endowed with much susceptibility of feeling: there is some truth in this, but perhaps it would be more just to say that he had not time to indulge the emotions of his heart. He proceeded straight forward to the object he had in view, without heeding the thorns which were scattered along his path. Thus, in the hundreds of battles in which he lost so many valuable officers, if feelings of regret arose in his heart, he seldom sought, by the expression of them, to console the grief of others."

Here the duke paused, and heaved a deep sigh.

"There is one occasion," observed I, "on which the Emperor appeared to me to betray great want of feeling. I allude to an observation he made after the battle of the Moskowa, where your brother, Auguste de Caulincourt, was killed. To you, duke, I may speak without reserve, and I must say that I was shocked at the words which the Emperor addressed to you in reference to the melancholy circumstance. These words are authentically recorded, and hold a place in history. 'Caulincourt,' said he, 'this, you know, is one of the disasters of war.' There was something exceedingly heartless in this. If he really felt no sympathy in the deep grief of a friend, he should have held his tongue, and silence might possibly have been taken for feeling. Alas! how grievous it is to utter a reproach against one whom we so devotedly worship."

The duke fixed his eyes on me, and I could easily perceive that his mind was occupied by a painful recollection, which the hand of time had but faintly soothed. I inwardly blamed my own inadvertence. I perceived that I had unguardedly given utterance to an idea which doubtless the duke had often sought to check when it arose in his own mind. The grave had now closed over all. The generous heart of Caulincourt cherished no feeling but pure and everlasting regret.

I had touched a chord which vibrated painfully, and I stretched out my hand to him in token of my regret. He took it; and pressed it cordially in his.

"How well you enter into my feelings," said he, with a melancholy smile.

"So well," replied I, "that I will be careful to remember the remark you made some time ago, that the Emperor must not be judged on the same level with other men."

The redoubt at which General Auguste de Caulincourt fell was watered with the blood of a thousand brave men and three generals: but the redoubt was carried, and the battle won.

General Moreau lost at once his life and his honor at the battle of Dresden. Never was crime followed by more prompt and signal punishment. The vengeance of Heaven seemed to have fallen on the head of the apostate! When the Emperor was informed of Moreau's death, he hastily turned to the Duke de Vicenza, and whispered in his ear—"My star! Caulincourt! My fortunate star! Oh! this event will form one of the most important pages in my history!"

Several times in the course of that same evening he reverted to the subject. According to his ideas of fatalism, the death of Moreau was a favor

of fortune—a returning smile of that destiny which had taken Lieutenant Bonaparte by the hand and led him through the path of glory to the highest altitude of worldly greatness—which enabled him to count kings among his vassals, and to hold a court at Tilsit to decide what share of his munificence each sovereign should receive.

That a French cannon ball should have laid Moreau prostrate at the very moment of his appearance in the enemy's camp is one of those extraordinary occurrences which it is difficult to refer to mere chance. Napoleon deduced from the fact a variety of consequences, suggested by his faith in predestination. The words which he whispered in the ear of his friend were characteristic of his feelings—"My star! Caulincourt!"

"I must confess," said the duke to me when we were conversing on this subject, "that Moreau's extraordinary death almost inclined me to share the Emperor's impressions. The multitude is marvellously prone to seize on these sinister moral lessons. With the name of General Moreau an awful warning will be for ever associated."

CHAPTER II.

An excursion to Remiremont—The old abbey—Continued illness of the Duke de Vicenza—Conversation respecting his embassy to Russia—Diplomatic instructions—The court of St. Petersburg—the state apartments—Court entertainments—A costly plate of pears—French actors at St. Petersburg—Frogère and the Emperor Alexander—The Grand Duke Constantine—The Emperor Alexander in love—The beautiful Madame N.—Mademoiselle Georges—The coquette's device—The Empress Elizabeth—Her devoted attachment to Alexander.

We had arranged with the Duke de Vicenza to make an excursion to Remiremont, a pretty little town, situated about four leagues from Plombières. At seven in the morning we set out in an open carriage. We visited the ruins of the celebrated Abbey of Remiremont. The church alone remains undecayed. In the cloister our attention was attracted by the remnants of a tomb, of the date of the middle ages. An old legend records that the beautiful Isaure de Coulanges, surnamed *l'Astre des nuits*, is interred beneath this monument.

This excursion very much fatigued the duke. He was so ill that he was confined to his room for two or three days. When he was well enough to see us, we called on him. Our conversation happened to turn on his embassy to Russia—on those four brilliant and poetic years of his existence.

"The time I spent in Russia," said the Duke de Vicenza, "is almost the only interval of my life to which I can refer without the fear of conjuring up some painful recollection.

"In 1807, when I was sent as ambassador to Russia, the Emperor Napoleon had attained the zenith of his political fortune. France had no boundaries save those determined by her sovereign. The French name was a talisman to which the nations of the world rendered homage and obedience. Then, indeed, there was glory and honor in being the representative of France!

"The Emperor always entertained a just idea of the noble and the grand. He was economical in his own personal expenses, and a decided foe to extravagance and wastefulness; yet he was munificent in all that related to the dignity of the crown. No sovereign had a nicer perception of what was due to his exalted position. He was desirous that the ambassador of the greatest nation in the world should maintain, with regal splendor, the rank of the country he had the honor to represent. 'I give you a *carte blanche* for the expenses of the embassy,' said he to me, 'We must not appear like citizens grown rich—the court of France must not show itself mean and petty. Our brother of Russia loves pleasure and luxury. Give magnificent *fêtes*—let them have something for their money.'

"He laughed heartily at this allusion. The Emperor was rarely gay, but when he was so, his flow of spirits rendered him singularly communicative.

"If, sire, I might venture to employ a vulgar phrase, but one that is *àpropos* to the subject, I should say ——"

"'That they have paid the piper beforehand,' interrupted he, with a renewed burst of laughter; then, with true Italian mobility of spirit, he added:—'Now, Caulincourt, let us talk seriously on cabinet diplomacy. As to the diplomacy of

the drawing-room, I feel assured that you will manage that like a true nobleman. Attend to me, Caulincourt. Bear in mind my instructions; and, above all, bear in mind my political plans and my system. If you do not thoroughly comprehend me, you will not be able to serve me well. In diplomacy, tact and good management are better than cunning. The machinery which used to be set in motion by the diplomatists of past times is now worn out. All their *finesse* is now well known; and after all, when we have it in our power to speak decidedly and downrightly,' continued he, raising his head haughtily, 'why should we resort to cunning? Dissimulation is always a mark of weakness.'

"He then explained to me his policy in reference to the court of Russia, and took a profound and luminous view of its consequences. His plan was gigantic, and was destined to produce incalculable results. Our conversation was long, and every observation that fell from him so completely rivetted my attention, that his instructions were indelibly impressed on my mind. My mission was a great and glorious one, and I felt within me the power to execute it worthily. Whether the Emperor intended to give me his final decision in this conversation I know not; but it is certain, that in the course of my embassy I frequently reminded him (though, alas, in vain) of the instructions I had received on the eve of my departure from Paris. But enough of this!

"You wish," continued the duke, "that I should introduce you to the brilliant court of Russia, where I found realised all the traditions of the youthful days of Lous XIV. Indeed, the glories of the *Grand Monarque* seemed at

that time a fond dream at the court of St. Petersburg. No court ever presented within itself so many elements of pleasure and excitement. Youth, beauty, gaiety, and splendor, were ever grouped round the throne.

"On reception days, the scene which presented itself in the saloons of the palace exceeded all that imagination can picture. It was a realisation of the wonders of the 'Arabian Nights.' Women of the most captivating beauty, grace, and elegance, were sparkling in diamonds, and arrayed with a gorgeousness truly Asiatic. Some were intelligent and well educated, others frivolous and ignorant; but all were beautiful, and all devotedly fond of music and dancing. The young men, by the grace of ther manners and language, and the elegance and luxury of their dress, completely eclipsed our most approved Parisian models, our Richelieus, Narbonnes, &c., &c.

"Every day brought new *fêtes*, new parties of pleasure. I confess that I found it no very easy matter to maintain my establishment in a style corresponding with Russian notions of munificence. Balls, concerts, plays, and suppers, occupied the evenings; and sledge parties were a favorite day amusement. I will mention one example out of a thousand, to give you an idea of the profuse expenditure of money in Russia.

"At a supper which was given after a ball at the Embassy, a plate of five pears cost 125 louis. On another occasion, cherries, which had been purchased at the price of four francs each, were served as abundantly as though they had cost no more than twenty sous per pound. You must not imagine that this was an exception worthy of remark, or calculated to excite surprise. On the

contrary, any attempt to spare this expense would have appeared shabby and absurd. Rayneval, my principal secretary, a very clever and promising young man, used frequently to join with me in deploring the necessity of this lavish waste of money.

"I must repeat to you a remark made by the Emperor on this subject. In my private correspondence with him, I frequently entered into the most minute details of all that was going on. He had desired me to write him gossiping letters. They amused him. When I informed him of the pears at 25 louis a piece, he answered, 'When I was a sub-lieutenant I should have thought myself very fortunate if my yearly income had been as much as the price of your plate of Russian pears. Such extravagances are only to be expected in madmen or fools.'

"I am certain," added the duke smiling, "that the Emperor was really angry at this silly profusion. *Though the piper had been paid beforehand*, yet he found it very difficult to digest the pears and cherries."

"Truly," observed I, "in a person so temperate and economical as our Emperor, such wanton prodigality was well calculated to excite contempt, and even anger."

"During my residence at St. Petersburg," resumed the duke, "I was continually struck by the curious contrasts which presented themselves to my observation. It would be difficult to convey an idea of the surprise which was excited in us Frenchmen on witnessing the absolute despotism of the Emperor, and the sort of idolatrous worship rendered to him throughout his dominions. Then, on the other hand, the excessive familiarity which the Emperor Alexander

sometimes tolerated on the part of persons of inferior condition exceeds all belief.

"There was a company of French actors at St. Petersburg; Mesdemoiselles Georges and Bourgoin, and Duport, of the Opera, were among them, and excited great admiration. The comedian, Frogère, a pupil of Dugazon, was a young man of agreeable manners, and possessed considerable talent. He had a good stock of that ready wit which is estimated highly in all countries. Frogère amused the Emperor, who treated him with wonderful condescension. This encouraged him to draw largely on his Majesty's favor. Frogère was freely admitted into the highest society. There was no *fête* at the palace, at the Embassy, or at the residences of the nobility, to which Frogère was not invited. In short, he was quite the rage.

"One evening, at a party given by the Empress, Frogère stepped up to the Emperor, and, drawing from his pocket an enormous snuff-box filled with ducats, he presented it to his Majesty, saying, 'Sire, will you take a pinch?"

"'What is the meaning of this joke?' inquired Alexander, with a good-humored smile.

"'It means, sire, that if your Majesty would take a pinch I shall feel much honored. M. Demidoff, who sent me this snuff-box to-day, informs me, that if your Majesty would be pleased to confer upon him the dignity of Knight Commander of Malta, which you promised him, he would often send me a supply of this snuff.'

"'Well, well, my dear Frogère, I will take care that you shall often have a pinch of Demidoff's snuff.' Soon after this the wished-for cross was seen on M. Demidoff's breast.

"The Emperor Alexander was one day con-

versing with Frogère on the dramatic art, and the pleasure of an actor's life. In the course of the conversation, Frogère observed—'You have no need to envy any one, sire. The truth is, that if I were not the actor Frogère, I should wish to be the Emperor of Russia.'

"The first presentation of Frogère to the Grand Duke Constantine took place one morning at the hour when the duke received his familiar visitors, whilst he was at his toilette. His Imperial Highness drew on a pair of yellow leather pantaloons, such as were worn at that time. Having found some fault with them, he drew them off again, and desired his valet to bring him another pair. Constantine, though his countenance was far from handsome, possessed a very fine figure, and he bestowed great attention on his dress. The Grand Duke, wholly intent on the business of his toilette, had not addressed a word to Frogère, when the latter said—

"'Monseigneur! I am not your dupe!'

"The Grand Duke turned round sharply, and, advancing towards Frogère, with an angry look, said—'What do you mean by that?'

"'I mean, your Highness, that I am not your dupe. You wish to show me that you have a handsome leg, and that you have two pairs of pantaloons at your service.'

"Every one present burst into a fit of laughter, and from that time Frogère became a favorite with the Grand Duke.

"In France," added the Duke de Vicenza, "we have no taste for extravagances of this sort. Napoleon would have thrown Frogère out of the window."

I felt very curious to know some particulars respecting a certain lady who made a conspicuous

figure at the court of St. Petersburg at the period to which the duke's conversation now referred. "Pray, duke," said I, "tell me something about the beautiful Madame N——, with whom the Emperor Alexander was so deeply in love, and whose coquetry so tormented him. I am quite of Napoleon's taste. I dearly love gossip."

"Oh!" replied the duke, smiling, "Alexander's passion for the fascinating Maria-Antona N——, is quite a romance.

"Madame N——, the wife of the Emperor's grand huntsman, was allied on her mother's side to the imperial family. If I were gifted with descriptive talent, I would draw a portrait of such captivating loveliness that it would turn the heads of half the young men in France, and yet it would fall far short of my model. How is it possible to describe grace of manner and the expression of a heavenly countenance? and these were the charms which rendered Madame N——, the most irresistibly fascinating woman I ever beheld. She was beautiful, exquisitely beautiful, clever, lively—an accomplished musician, an excellent singer, and a most desperate coquette.

"One day, when I drew her portrait in this way, to herself, she laughed heartily, and told me the likeness was not flattered.

"I feel convinced that if I had had the good fortune, or the ill fortune, to be the lover of that delightful woman, she would have driven me mad.

"A few months after my arrival at St. Petersburg, the Emperor Alexander admitted me to his friendship. He possessed a truly noble and amiable disposition. We were both of the same age. I loved him as a brother; and he, on his

part, maintained his intercourse with me on a footing of friendship and equality which he could not have extended even to his own brothers. Sovereigns can only have subjects. Sentimental people may deny this fact, but it is nevertheless uncontrovertible.

"Many times, when the court circle had broken up, and I had returned home—indeed, not unfrequently after I had retired to bed, have I seen the Emperor Alexander enter my chamber. He would pass a portion of the night seated at my bed side, and making me the confidant of his sorrows, his anxieties and jealousies.

"On one of these occasions he said to me, 'Did you remark, my dear duke, how coquettishly she conversed this evening with Tol——? She danced three times with him!—with that blockhead Tol——, who looks just like a lackey, always stooping down to pick up a glove, a fan, or a boquet, and all to obtain a look or a smile. What fools men are! Such conduct really excites contempt.'

"But, your Majesty——

"'Ah, my dear Caulincourt, for the hundredth time let me entreat you not to address me thus. If you are to regard me merely as a sovereign, there must be an end of this confidential and friendly intercourse which renders me so happy.'

"'Well then, sire, let me ask you, do you think it extraordinary that other men besides yourself should admire Madame N——?

"'But they have not common sense. My dear friend, I assure you that woman renders me the most miserable of men by her insufferable coquetry. She knows it, and cares not. When I reproach her for her love of admiration and flattery, she replies—"What else do women live

for? What would life be worth if deprived of all that is agreeable and poetic? I love only you, Alexander, but I like the admiration of all!" She'll drive me mad!' sighed the Autocrat of all the Russias, in the most pitiable manner imaginable.

"When he succeeded in forgetting her for a few hours, he was quite elated by his revenge. But in a little time he was more her slave than ever and she made him pay dearly for his infidelity.

"It was said that the beautiful Mademoiselle G—— for a time seduced Alexander from his allegiance to Madame N——. All the admirers of the latter lady, elated by hope, were immediately at her feet. Madame N—— felt the slight severely; and though it did not perhaps very deeply wound her heart, yet it mortified her pride.

"The handsome Leon N——, the cousin of Madame N——, had long been an ardent though a silent admirer of his captivating relation. The lady now encouraged him by a few kind words, and his long repressed passion burst out without reserve. He was deeply in love, and was no longer able to conceal the sentiment that gained complete mastery over his soul. He was just at that age when a young man will not hesitate to sacrifice glory, fortune, and even life itself, to an absorbing passion. Leon sacrificed all these. Whether he secured happiness I cannot inform you.

"No circumstance that took place at court could be kept secret. The Emperor was not disinclined to be faithless himself, but he did not choose that Madame N—— should follow his example. The consequence was, that a

furious fit of jealousy took possession of the Emperor.

"'These people,' said he to me, 'are sporting with their own lives, or at least with their fortunes and liberty. I have the power to annihilate the audacious N——, and I might use it. But no, that heartless coquette shall not induce me to exile a man for her sake. My dear duke, I cannot prevail on myself to commit such an act of severity to avenge a personal injury to myself. And yet I sometimes feel very much inclined to send that coxcomb Leon N—— to make an excursion in Siberia.'

"I endeavored to soothe him, and to avert the imperial thunder from the head of the unfortunate lover. I urged many arguments in his behalf.

"'I am certain she does not love him, resumed the Emperor; 'she has not the least regard for him. Antona, in fact, loves no one. She is vain and cold-hearted! She thinks by this means to punish me, to drive me to despair; but she shall see that I know how to estimate her. I assure you that she is now entirely an object of indifference to me.'

"I must needs confess, that whilst the Emperor uttered these words I found it no easy matter to preserve my gravity; for I could clearly see through the coquettish manœuvre adopted by Madame de N——. Her object merely was to alarm the Emperor's jealousy, and she had succeeded beyond her expectations.

"The misunderstanding between the Emperor and the lady, which lasted a month, kept the court in a state of commotion; it was the general topic of conversation. A nobleman of high rank, who was admitted to the intimacy of Alex-

ander, was appointed to open negotiations for peace, and diplomatic notes were regularly exchanged. The lady would stoop to no abatement of her high dignity, and the correspondence was maintained with all the forms which would have been observed between two sovereign powers. It was really a most amusing affair. The Empress' drawing-room presented a curious field for observation. There the two belligerent powers, the Emperor and Madame N——, appeared every evening face to face.

"Surely," said I, "the amours of Alexander must have caused great uneasiness to the Empress, who, I have understood, was very beautiful."

"The Empress Elizabeth was a beautiful and captivating woman; but she was amiable and resigned, and she never complained of her fate, though her heart was blighted. The crown well became her noble brow; and she well understood the mission of a woman who wears a crown; she suffered, and smiled. Elizabeth concealed, amidst the splendor of her imperial state, that deep sorrow, that mortal anguish, which casts a gloom even over the brightest things. When her melancholy and penetrating glance dwelt on the lovely countenance of Madame N——, she seemed to reproach her for having usurped her happiness. The beautiful, graceful, and accomplished Elizabeth was neglected by the man to whom she had given all her affection, and whom she loved, not because he was Emperor of all the Russias, but because he was Alexander."

The evening was advancing, and we took leave of the Duke de Vicenza. Next day we met him at the fountain.

CHAPTER III.

My neglect of the order of dates and subjects explained—Details relating to the court of Russia—A note from Napoleon—The Empress Elizabeth—Her inquiries respecting the French court—Napoleon's attention to female dress—A gallant present from the French Emperor—Imperial reviews—The Russian guards—Vast expense bestowed on their uniforms, horses, &c.—The Emperor and the sledge driver—Alexander's familiarity with his inferiors—Count Ouwaroff and Princess S....—The interview on the Niemen—The beautiful Queen of Prussia—Boildieu and Lafont—The Grand Chamberlain Narishkim.

In describing the interesting conversations which we had the good fortune to enjoy with the Duke of Vicenza, I am aware that I may incur the reproach of turning suddenly from one subject to another, and totally disregarding the order of dates. My explanation will be brief.

We listened to the revelations of the duke with all the intense interest natural to persons who were being made acquainted with new facts in a marvellous period of history. I every morning made notes of what I had heard during the preceding day; but in so doing, my object was merely to while away some of those tedious hours which always hang heavily on an invalid; and I had no thought of collecting materials for publication.

I copy my notes literally, without any attempt to arrange dates or subjects; these pages, therefore, present a faithful record of the conversations of a man whose statements need not the coloring of fiction to invest them with interest.

We had been greatly amused in listening to the anecdotes of the court of St. Petersburg, related in the foregoing chapter, and I asked the duke de Vicenza whether his recollections of Russia were exhausted.

"I understand you," replied he; "I know there is more kindness than curiosity in your wish to return with me to St. Petersburg; because in so doing we must for awhile forsake Napoleon for Alexander. I have brought with me to Plombières all the papers relating to my embassy to Russia. I happen at this moment to have in my pocket a little autograph note of the Emperor, which I will show you.

"I have already told you that the Emperor Napoleon was curious to know all that was passing in the interior of the court of Russia. The misunderstanding which prevailed for the space of a month between Alexander and the beautiful Madame N——, was like an armistice which precedes either peace or a decisive battle. The Emperor, who was still a young man, in every sense of the term, could turn his thoughts to nothing but the capitulation which the lady was making him wait for—the victory which she intended to make him purchase dearly. He was quite unable to attend to business; to get him to sign any document, or to discuss any serious affair, would have been impossible. 'The head follows the heart,' said he to me one day; 'suppose, my dear Caulincourt, that we defer this communication till next week; write to your court, and say that I am rather unwell. You will only tell the truth. That woman will drive me mad!'"

"After I had acquainted the Emperor Napoleon with this affair, he wrote me the following note in his own hand. It was appended to a letter containing diplomatic instructions:—

"'It is not a matter of indifference to me to observe the character of that man, who was born a sovereign. A woman turns the head of the Autocrat of all the Russias! All the women in the world would not make me lose an hour. Continue to acquaint me of every thing; let me know the most minute details. The private life of a man is a mirror in which we may see many useful lessons reflected.'

"But," pursued the duke, "if Napoleon was eager to know all that was passing in the court of Russia, Alexander was no less curious in his inquiries respecting the Tuileries. When he questioned me closely, you may easily imagine that I protected myself by a due share of diplomatic discretion.

"With the Empress Elizabeth I found it no easy task to maintain my reserve. Her Majesty's questions respecting Napoleon were endless. Whenever I was present in her little drawing-room circle, she subjected me to a minute interrogatory respecting the countenance, the figure, the manners, and the habits, of *my* Emperor. Then, with the graceful frivolity of a woman, she would string together endless questions respecting our court receptions, our balls, fêtes, aed fashions; whether the French ladies were as fascinating as she had heard them represented? What was their court costume? &c. &c. As I could answer such questions without the fear of compromising any state secrets, I most willingly resigned my ambassadorial dignity to enjoy the pleasure of chatting with the charming Empress Elizabeth.

"'Monsieur le Duc,' said she one day, in that soft sweet voice which I never heard equalled; 'Monsieur le Duc, how I should like to hide myself in a little corner whence I might get a peep

at one of your court balls! How I should like to see your beautiful countrywomen, arrayed in all their grace and elegance! I am told that they are exceedingly captivating.'

"Oh, your Majesty," replied I, "there are captivating women in every country.

"'I don't know that, for I have never been out of Russia,' said she, with indescribable archness of manner; 'however, it is very certain that we cannot vie with the Parisian ladies in elegance. Their fashions never reach us until they are quite out of date.' As she uttered these words her pretty countenance assumed an expression of regret.

"Even Napoleon, the Great Captain," continued the duke, "did not think it beneath him sometimes to turn his attention to female dress. Several ladies at the court of the Tuileries knew this by sad experience. One day at Saint Cloud, I heard him say in a very angry tone, to the wife of a general, 'Madame, when a lady has a husband with an income of 100,000 francs per annum, she may very well afford a new dress every time she has the honor to pay her court to the Empress. Endowments, madame, are favors. I do not owe them; and when I give them it is with the view that they should help to maintain that luxury without which commerce cannot thrive.' The poor lady was overwhelmed with confusion; yet it must be admitted that the general shabbiness of her dress fully justified this mark of imperial displeasure.

"But to return to the Empress Elizabeth. I acquainted my redoubtable master with the admiration expressed by the Empress of all the Russians for French fashions.

"In a very short time afterwards four large

packages arrived at St. Petersburg, addressed to the Empress. They contained a beautiful assortment of millinery, consisting of hats, caps, toques, flowers, ribbons, &c., all in the most exquisite taste. Elizabeth had ordered nothing, and expected nothing, from Paris. All these elegant things came as if they had fallen from the clouds.

"In the evening, at her little drawing-room circle, the Empress stepped up to me, and, holding up her finger with a playful air of menace, she said, 'Duke, you have been indiscreet; but no matter: when you next write, pray say that I am delighted with the things. They are exquisite, truly exquisite.' The Empress then retired to another part of the room, and left me quite mystified. I could form no idea of what she alluded to.

"Next day there was a sledge party. The Emperor did me the honor to desire that I would take my seat in the Empress's sledge.

"In the course of our drive I said, Will your Majesty be pleased to explain to me how I have been guilty of the indiscretion with which you last night charged me?

"The Empress instantly solved the enigma. I assured her that I had not been let into the secret, and that not a line had been written to me on the subject. This was the fact.

"I have no doubt that the orders were given quite secretly in Paris, and that no one had an idea whence they emanated. This act of gallantry was quite in good taste. The present in itself was of no great value. The articles of which it was composed were suited to the taste of a young and elegant woman, but were not sufficiently costly to be presented to the Empress.

"I thought it remarkable that the Empress

Elizabeth never asked me any questions respecting Josephine. Possibly she thought that *Madame Beauharnois crowned* was a person below the level of imperial dignity. Napoleon, the sub-lieutenant, passing rapidly through his vast and glorious career, and by the sole aid of his sword ascending the first throne in the world—Napoleon was like a luminous disc to the Empress of all the Russias, herself the daughter of a king."

"I should like," said I to the Duke de Vicenza, "to hear some account of those brilliant reviews. I have heard that Alexander manifested no little vanity in exhibiting these spectacles, in their utmost magnificence, to the eyes of the French ambassador."

"He did so," replied the duke; "and certainly I never beheld any thing of the kind equal in magnificence to the imperial reviews at St. Petersburg. The Emperor was extremely vain of them, and he one day asked me whether his reviews equalled those of the Tuileries. Sire, replied I, they are both incomparable. He looked at me, and smiled; I think he understood me.

"In the reviews at St. Petersburg there were never less than 20,000, and often as many as 30,000 men assembled on the ground. The troops, it must be confessed, were admirable, both with regard to personal appearance and dress. Each regiment of cavalry had horses of one uniform color—viz., all black, gray, white, bay, &c. The colonel of each regiment was one of the most distinguished nobleman of the court of Russia; and they all expended vast sums in keeping up the fine appearance of their troops.

"Among the finest troops in the Russian service I may class the corps of horse guards raised by Paul I. In this regiment, every private is a

knight of Malta. Their uniform is red, with massive silver cuirasses, and they wear the cross of Malta in relief on their breasts, forming a large escutcheon. The officers of this corps are all noblemen of the highest rank. Their uniforms, and the trappings of their horses, glitter with gold lace and jewels. Their Arabian horses, too, are of immense value.

"One of the best regiments of the hussar guards was that commanded by Colonel Scherwertiuskim, the brother of Madame N——. He was one of the most elegant young men I ever saw. His scarlet uniform, richly adorned with gold lace and a profusion of costly fur, set off his tall military figure to the best advantage. He obtained permission to have black horses in his regiment; and the shining jetty skins of these fine animals, contrasted with the brilliant red uniforms of their riders, produced a fine effect. The saddle cloths and trappings of the horses were richly embroidered with gold. Colonel Scherwertiuskim expended on his regiment no less a sum than 50,000 roubles per annum over and above the allowance granted by the state. The officers vied with each other in luxury and munificence. Not one of them would mount a horse of less value than 2,000 roubles. I have mentioned only two corps, but all were characterised by equal magnificence.

"Nothing could surpass the splendor of the imperial reviews—for Russian uniform is at once martial and elegant. Both men and uniforms are alike well made, and present a most warlike aspect. The staff officers who surrounded the Emperor formed a most dazzling group; and the young sovereign had good reason to be proud of his reviews.

"The military evolutions and manœuvres were executed with the most perfect precision and effect; and every man engaged in them, even down to the privates and corporals, sought and found, amidst the fairer portion of the spectators, two bright eyes to stimulate his spirit and address.

"At the close of one of these imperial reviews, the Emperor alluded to an amusing adventure which was at the time the general topic of conversation.

"Alexander loved to go out unattended and plainly dressed; and in these solitary excursions he frequently wandered as far as three or four leagues from the capital. One day feeling fatigued, he stepped into the first sledge he met. 'Drive to the imperial palace at St. Petersburg,' said he, to the ystwotshilk, or sledge driver.

"'Very well, officer,' replied the man. 'I will set you down as near to it as I can; but you know the guards will not allow us to approach the gates.'

"On arriving within some distance of the palace, the sledge driver stopped.

"'You must alight here, sir, if you please; I cannot take you further.'

"The Emperor got out of the sledge, saying—'Wait there, my good fellow, and I will send you the money.'

"'No, no,' said the man, 'I give no credit. I have lost too much already by you officers: I have trusted many of your comrades, and they always forgot to pay me. You must leave me something as a pledge, or ——'

"This greatly amused Alexander, who could not repress a hearty fit of laughter, and unclasping his cloak he threw it into the sledge.

"On entering his apartments in the palace, he

directed his valet-de-chambre to give fifty rubles to the ystwotshilk who had driven him in the sledge, and to bring back his cloak.

"The valet went out, and found about twenty sledges drawn up at a little distance from the palace gates.

"'Which of you drove the Emperor?" said he, addressing the drivers.

"To this inquiry no answer was returned.

"'Which of you has a cloak left as security for payment?'

"'An officer left this cloak with me,' replied one of the ystwotshilks.

"'Give it to me, and here is your money.' He handed him the fifty rubles.

"'Gracious Saint Nicolas!' exclaimed the astonished sledge driver. Without uttering another word, he seized his reins, and, setting his horses at a full gallop, he departed with the swiftness of an arrow, amidst the loud huzzas of his comrades.

"This little incident took place on the evening preceding one of the imperial reviews. It used to be the custom, after the manœuvres were ended, for the commanders of the different corps to form a group round the Emperor.

"'Gentlemen,' said his Majesty, 'I am very well satisfied with you. Your regiments look well, and are altogether in an admirable condition; but, gentlemen, I request you will tell your officers from me that I was yesterday indebted to them for the humiliation of being compelled to leave my cloak in pledge.'

"All stared at one another with amazement.

"'It is so, I assure you,' resumed the Emperor. The ystwotshilk who drove me to the palace last night, refused to give me credit be-

cause, to use his own words, my brother officers often forgot to pay him.'

"Every one was bewildered in conjecture, and no one could guess to what the Emperor alluded. In the evening, at a party given by Madame N——, the Emperor solved the mystery by relating his adventure. He told it with such admirable humor, and imitated so perfectly the voice and manner of the sledge driver, that all who heard him were convulsed with laughter.

"I have already mentioned," said the Duke de Vicenza, "the easy familiarity observed by Alexander towards his inferiors. One morning, as the Emperor and I were walking on the Perspective, (a spacious and beautiful promenade in St. Petersburg,) we met Andrieux, the actor, the husband of Madame Philis.

"'Good morning, Andrieux,' said Alexander, 'how are you?'

"'Very well, sire; and how are you?"

"'How is your wife?'

"'Very well, sire. I hope your Majesty's wife and mother are well."

"This sort of familiarity used to amuse Alexander and his descriptions of droll scenes of this kind often excited great merriment in the drawing-rooms of St. Petersburg.

"When I was speaking of Frogère the actor," pursued the Duke de Vicenza, "I forgot to relate to you an anecdote which I had from the mouth of the Emperor himself.

"Frogère was on a footing of the most perfect intimacy with Prince Alexander before his accession to the throne. But when the death of Paul I. raised the Prince to the imperial throne, Frogère was no longer seen at court. Some time afterwards the Emperor met him.

"'Ah! Frogère!' said his Majesty, how is it I never see you now?'

"'Why, sire, the truth is, I could visit the imperial prince just like one of my own comrades—but now—'

"'But now you will not come to see the Emperor?'

"'Precisely, sire. I confess that I was afraid your good fortune might have rendered you proud. But now, since I find that you are not so, I will come and see you.'

"Instead of being offended at this free and easy style of behavior, the Emperor was highly diverted by it.

"The young noblemen who figured at the court of St. Petersburg were guilty of licences which, though not less reprehensible, were more consistent with courtly breeding. Alexander viewed them with inconceivable indulgence. General Ouwaroff, who enjoyed the friendship and intimacy of the Emperor was a remarkably handsome man. His vanity, his luxury, and expenses, exceeded all imaginable extravagance. He was celebrated for his love intrigues and conquests; and his name was constantly figuring in some affair of gallantry. He was a man of undaunted courage, and his redoubted sword kept all assailants at defiance. He was the fortunate lover of the beautiful Princess S——, whom he suddenly deserted, and avowed an ardent passion for Madame L——. The princess sent back his letters, and his portrait which she had received from him in her days of happiness. She disdained explanations and reproaches; but she was weak enough to love, though conscious of being no longer beloved. In her despair she ended her existence by a dose of poison.

"This event caused a great sensation, and the fate of the princess was universally deplored. Ouwaroff perceived that he could not brave the storm. He solicited his congé; it was granted; and he passed several months in travelling. On his return, the Emperor read him a severe lecture, and desired him to be more circumspect.

"'Sire, it is my wish to be so—but these women's brains are turned. I cannot say how soon they may draw me into another scrape.'

"This General Ouwaroff, in spite of his vanity and levity was one of the bravest of the brave. At the interview which took place between the two Emperors on the Niemen, after the battle of Friedland, in 1807, Alexander arrived on the raft, accompanied by the Grand Duke Constantine, the General-in-Chief Beningsen, Prince Lubanoff, and General Ouwaroff. The Emperor Napoleon was attended by Murat, Marshals Berthier and Bessieres, General Duroc and myself.

"There was an indescribable charm in Napoleon's manner when he was intent on pleasing. The interview on the Niemen, within view of the two armies, was invested with a poetic ideality which could not fail to excite the imagination. Napoleon, the conqueror, held in his hands the destinies of two great powers, whom he might have annihilated by a single breath; yet, disdaining to punish, he offered protection and friendship to his vanquished enemies. This is a glorious page in Napoleon's history."

Here the duke paused, and his countenance forcibly expressed the painful feelings which crossed his mind—feelings naturally excited by a comparison of the glorious past and the miserable present. Alas! at that moment I felt the

justice of the duke's remark, that *there was no longer room for him in France!*

"When the two Emperors met, resumed the duke, "on the raft, on the Niemen, they cordially embraced each other several successive times. 'Brother,' said Napoleon, holding one of Alexander's hands in his, 'the fate of arms has proved adverse to you. But your army is valiant and devoted. Your troops have performed prodigies of valor. The Russians are essentially a brave people. Who commanded the cavalry?' continued he, addressing the General-in-Chief, Beningsen.

"As soon as Napoleon asked this question, a very elegant young officer stepped forward, and eagerly answered it by the words '*Je, sire.*'

"On hearing this, the two Emperors could not refrain from smiling. 'General,' said Napoleon to the young officer, 'though you do not speak very good French, you are a brave man and an able commander.'

"The power of fascination which Napoleon exercised over his own soldiery was felt in an equal degree by all who surrounded him. It gave him the ascendancy in all places and in all situations. No words can express—no pencil can portray—the enthusiasm which was excited in all who witnessed the interview on the raft of the Niemen. Alexander possessed the advantages of imperial birth and a noble figure, (he was a foot taller than our Napoleon;) yet the latter seemed to rise majestically above all who surrounded him, and was the principal personage in the magical scene. At the moment when the two Emperors embraced, the troops who covered the banks of the river raised enthusiastic hurras which almost rent the air. That was one of the most glorious hours of my life.

"I need not relate to you the occurrences of Tilsit, all the official details of which are generally known. But only those who were near the person of Napoleon at the time can form an adequate idea of the grace and delicacy he observed in his relations with the sovereigns, and the easy and polished dignity with which he maintained his high post of magnanimous protector. He had no vulnerable point for adulation and flattery. In vain did the fascinating Queen of Prussia call into play all the powers of seduction with which beauty and high talents had liberally endowed her. Napoleon did what he had determined to do; and he conceded nothing which he had resolved to keep. Never was man gifted with such perfect self-command. He really appeared superior to human nature.

"In the evening, when he returned to his own apartments, he would enter into familiar conversation with me. On one of these occasions, he said—'What do you think of us now, *Monsieur le Grand Ecuyer?* Are we not a magnificent conqueror?'

"Sire, you do the honors of the country in admirable style to your brothers of Prussia and Russia.

"He laughed and said—'Betweeen ourselves Caulincourt, I have conquered hearts as well as countries.'

"But I trust that your Majesty will not leave your own heart behind you?

"'Truly,' replied he, 'I have something else to think of than love. No man wins triumphs in that way without forfeiting some palms of glory. I have traced out my plan; and, *ma foi!* the finest eyes in the world (and there are some very fine eyes here, Caulincourt) shall not make me deviate a hair's breadth from it.'

"Your Majesty is then quite inaccessible to seduction?

'"*Ah baste!* The King of Prussia excites my pity, Caulincourt. But no matter! he must be satisfied with the share I have given him. If I were to yield one thing to-day, another would be asked to-morrow, and something else the day after, till at length I should find that I have been working to save the King of Prussia. Alexander is an excelleet young man. . I believe him to be honorable and sincere. We shall come to a right understanding with him.'

"I have no doubt of that, sire. He is filled with admiration of your Majesty.

"'That is because I am so singular a being, Caulincourt. My fate has been so extraordinary!' As the emperor uttered these words, I could read in his countenance that his thoughts were reverting to Toulon.

"But I am wandering far from the court of St. Petersburg," resumed the Duke de Vicenza, after a short pause.

"In the year 1810, there was collected in St. Petersburg a distinguished conclave of professors of the dramatic and musical arts. Most of our favorite Parisian singers and dancers had solicited *congés* for Russia, and at the theatre of St. Petersburg we might, without any great stretch of imagination, have supposed ourselves at the grand opera in Paris. Besides the actors and actresses whose names I have already mentioned to you, we had Madame Philis Andrieux and her husband, and about ten others of second-rate talent. Boieldieu composed operas, and charming little pieces for private concerts. The beautiful Madame Lafont was a distinguished favorite: she sang divinely, and her eyes dis-

coursed, if possible, more eloquently than her voice. Her husband, at that time the first violinist in Europe, collected all the beau-monde of St. Petersburg at his morning concerts. Nobody having any pretension to fashion would have been absent without very good cause from Lafont's musical *réunions*. Beukendorf, the brother of Princess Lieven, and then governor-general of St. Petersburg, would have thought himself lost had any thing occurred to prevent him attending Lafont's concerts, and paying his devoirs to the elegant women whom he was sure to find assembled there.

"M. Narishkim, the grand chamberlain, brother to the grand equerry, lived in a style of regal splendor. His palace was the resort of all the best company in St. Petersburg, and was frequently honored by the presence of the Emperor himself. His apartments, profusely decorated with gold, bronze, porphyry, and flowers, gave a fairy-like character to his balls and fêtes, of which similar entertainments in Paris can convey no idea.

"A report was current that the Emperor intended to confer the dignity of Prince on the grand chamberlain. At one of his splendid *dejeuners*, I was walking with M. Narishkim, in one of the delicious conservatories adjoining the suit of drawing-rooms. The melodious strains of the music, and the balmy odor of the flowers, threw new spells over the enchanting scene. I could not help expressing to M. Narishkim my admiration of the exquisite beauty and magnificence of his palace; and I added, that the owner of such a residence ought to bear the title of prince.

"'Look round, duke,' replied he, 'and tell

me whether you think any title can add to the splendor of my station? I do not think it worth my while to contradict this absurd report every time I hear it idly repeated; but to you, duke, I will explain the truth, for I do not wish it to be believed at your court that a Narishkim can derive the title of prince from any other than himself. The truth is, that the Emperor has expressed a desire to confer that dignity upon me; but when he mentioned the matter, I replied —'Sire, the mother of Peter the Great was a Narishkim; the title of prince, therefore, cannot elevate the dignity of a family which has the honor to be so nearly allied to your Majesty. The Narishkims are no less illustrious than the Emperor of all the Russias.'

"Whether Alexander was displeased at this proud language, I cannot say; at all events he possessed too much magnanimity of feeling to manifest displeasure. The chamberlain continued in favor; but the subject of the principality was never again mentioned to him."

CHAPTER IV.

The battle of the Moskowa—Petrowisk, the emancipated serf—Horrible scene—Solitude of the streets of Moscow—Attempt to assassinate Napoleon—Religious fanaticism in Russia—Murat's courage—General Kutasoff—Intrigues of the English cabinet—Conversation with the Emperor Alexander—His message to Napoleon—Warnings disregarded—Napoleon's habit of disguising his feelings—A misstatement refuted—Alarm of fire at the Kremlin—The burning of Moscow—Review of the Imperial Guard—Napoleon's interpretation of a celebrated remark of Louis XIV.

"THE battle of the Moskowa made frightful havoc in the forces of Russia. The natural courage of the Russians, joined to despair and fanaticism, prompted them to dispute the victory to the utmost. On the fate of the battle depended the fate of Moscow; and to the Russians Moscow was the holy city, the favored of hĕaven. The *levée en masse* had been effected with indescribable ardor and enthusiasm. The clergy, who exercise an all-powerful ascendancy over the minds of the peasantry, had summoned them to the defence of the country, blessed them, and predicted their invincibility. The revered Virgin of the Seven Sorrows had been paraded through the city. Every army corps directed against the French had knelt at the feet of the holy statue, sworn to defend Moscow, and to return victorious. During the month which the Russian troops occupied in marching through Moscow, the city resounded with cries of 'Death to the French!' A serf, who

had been emancipated in the reign of Paul I., and who, at the time to which I am now alluding, was a blind old man of eighty, had thirteen sons or grandsons serving in the Russian army as volunteers. 'Go,' said he, on taking leave of them, 'and do not spare your blood in the defence of your country and your religion. You will return victorious. God is just. But if the heavenly wrath should light upon our city—if it be ordained that foreigners shall profane our capital, I swear that they shall march over my body before they enter it.'

"The Russians lost the battle of the Moskowa, and the French troops advanced to the ancient capital of the empire. The inhabitants fled, and the city was speedily deserted. Petrowisk, the blind old man, resisted the tears and entreaties of his family, and refused to depart. 'This is the soil that gave me birth,' said he, striking the ground with his stick; 'here I have lived for eighty years, and here I am resolved to die.' This old man was inexorable. All the family emigrated, taking with them the little property they could rescue from the pillage of the soldiery. At the moment of departure, four generations on their knees implored the blessing of the revered head of their family. The tall figure of Petrowisk, his white hair and flowing beard, his large dark eyes, open and fixed, imparted a sort of poetic interest to the scene. With uplifted hands, he pronounced these words—'May the blessing of Heaven, and of your aged father, follow you wheresoever you direct your footsteps. We shall meet again in heaven; to that abode of the righteous the French will never gain entrance.' Then, turning to his eldest son, he said in a low voice,

'You have given me your word, Ivan!' The son replied, in a resolute tone, 'Father, I will keep my promise.'

"The blind man remained in his dwelling. All his family departed, with the exception of one of his grandsons, a youth of sixteen, who had resolved to share the fate of his grandfather. Next day, the French advanced guard defiled on the high road: the head of the column touched the gates of Moscow. At intervals several musket-shots penetrated the ranks. They were evidently fired by a practised hand, and not a single ball missed its aim. Many soldiers were killed and wounded. An officer struck in the head by one of the balls fell dead from his horse. All eyes were turned in the direction whence the shots had been fired. An old man, whose long white beard covered his breast, was seen sitting on the ground, and resting his back against a tree. Our soldiers rushed towards him with their drawn bayonets in their hands. At this moment a young man descended from the tree, and, throwing himself before the old man, fired two pistols which he had in his girdle, and then drew a large poignard to defend himself. But he was speedily overpowered by numbers, and fell bleeding and lifeless at the feet of Petrowisk. 'Now,' exclaimed he, 'kill me, accursed French! That brave youth is my grandson, and it was I, Petrowisk, who armed him.'

"About an hour afterwards, the Emperor, attended by his staff, passed the spot where this incident had occurred. 'Ah!' exclaimed he, turning his horse to the opposite side of the road, 'this is a cowardly murder! An old man!' All who beheld the appalling sight turned away from it with horror. The old man was still in a sitting

position; his eyes were open and fixed, his white beard was clotted with blood, and his garments were pierced by the swords of his assailants. At the foot of the tree, the lifeless corse of a young lad lay weltering in a pool of blood.

"The Emperor was naturally superstitious, and this horrible spectacle made a profound impression on his mind.

"As he passed through the streets of Moscow, on his way to the Kremlin, he was struck with the aspect of the city. All the houses were closely shut up, and not one of the inhabitants was to be seen. It would be difficult to form an idea of the melancholy effect of this silence and torpor in the midst of a great capital. On first descrying the city our soldiery raised the cry of 'Moscow! Moscow! the promised land!' But their joy was speedily succeeded by depression.

"'This solitude is awful,' said the Emperor to me.

"In the evening a man was discovered concealed under the staircase leading to the Emperor's apartments. The Emperor wished to see and question him, but the man could not speak a word of French, and an interpreter was sent for. The Emperor, who was agitated and impatient, paced rapidly up and down the room, and several times spoke to the prisoner, forgetting that he could neither understand nor answer him. At length the interpreter arrived. A long colloquy ensued, and it was curious to observe the air of pride and inspiration which sat upon the countenance of the man. He was about fifty years of age, of tall stature, and his features had a fierce expression. 'What does he say? what does he say?' inquired the Emperor every moment. We elicited from him that his name was Ivan, and that

he was the son of Petrowisk, the blind man. He had solemnly sworn to his father that he would assassinate Napoleon; and to accomplish that purpose he had disguised and concealed himself. He had stripped one of our soldiers, who had been killed on the road, and, disguised in the French uniform, he experienced no difficulty in gaining access to the place where he had been found concealed.

"'Why this furious hatred towards me? How have I injured this Petrowisk personally?' said Napoleon. 'I spare this man's life,' added he; 'let him be conducted out of the city, and I desire that he be not harmed. This matter must rest among ourselves,' he said, addressing himself to the persons present. 'I desire it may not be mentioned.'

"'Caulincourt,' said he to me, when we were alone together, 'my entrance into Moscow has been marked by gloomy presages. Diabolical machinations have been set on foot here. Religious fanaticism has been called into action. It is a powerful and a successful engine when exercised over an uncivilised people. In France, if we were to resort to such jugglery, we should be laughed at. In Russia, it raises up devoted assassins. This war resembles no other. At Eylau, at Friedland, we had to contend only with soldiers; here we have to conquer a whole nation.'

"After his interview with the Russian assassin," said the Duke de Vicenza, "Napoleon was thoughtful and downcast. His eyes, usually so bright and animated, appeared dim and languid, and an indescribable expression of uneasiness was depicted in his countenance. I endeavored to rouse him from this state of nervous depression, which I knew was the result of the restraint

he had imposed on himself for the preceding eighty-and-forty hours. But unfortunately I was myself at that moment under the influence of the most gloomy presentiments."

"The Emperor rose, and walked several times up and down the room, with his arms crossed on his bosom, and his head hanging down; then stopping short, he exclaimed:—'And Murat!—Murat, without awaiting my orders, without seeking any counsel, save that of his own wild brain, has thought fit to take the route to Voladimir! Murat is ardent, brilliant in the field of battle. He possesses dauntless courage; but he is totally devoid of judgment. To know when to stop is sometimes the best proof of understanding. Murat has not common sense. This *fanfaronade* has thrown me into a most embarrassing dilemma. I cannot call him back without proclaiming our weakness, and to send him reinforcements would be to recommence the war. I am always ill understood and ill seconded by the members of my own family.' These last words were uttered in a very dissatisfied manner, and he began again to pace up and down the room.

"I made some remarks on the ardent courage and impetuosity of the King of Naples, and endeavoured to excuse his inconsiderate movement, which at the time threatened the most unfortunate consequences.

"'No no, Caulincourt,' resumed the Emperor, 'his imprudence is unpardonable. The fact is, that he and some others of my family know not how to support their high fortune. Their heads are turned; I have done too much for them. But no more of this.'

"He stepped up to a table, and spread out upon it a map of Poland. 'You see, Caulincourt,' said

he, 'I could not have remained in Poland. I should speedily have been surrounded on all sides, supposing some defections among my allies. That plan might have been attended with danger—and yet——No, it was best to advance—to astonish by the rapidity of my marches and my victories. Now the die is cast. Before six months have elapsed I must be in St. Petersburg—I must! I will establish my winter quarters there. I thought to have stopped here—but I shall merely halt long enough to let the army rest: I must positively be in St. Petersburg by the first of November. I will echelone my troops,' pursued he, and his countenance brightened up as he spoke. 'I shall receive reinforcements from France. My garrisons are provisioned for six months. This is a formidable league. But I will subdue it, with God's help.'

"I was far from sharing the Emperor's hopes. Adverse circumstances were multiplying around us. A volcano seemed ready to burst beneath our feet; and," added the Duke de Vicenza, in a tone of deep dejection, "even then I saw no promise in the future. The Emperor might possibly be under the influence of illusion; but certainly I was not. The plots which had long been secretly hatched by England, were now ripe for full and complete execution. Russia, by letting loose upon us her barbarous hordes, was employing dangerous resources. She was playing a desperate game. At that time, General Kutusoff, who was the tool of the English Cabinet, possessed such unbounded power, that he was more like the Sovereign of all the Russians than Alexander.

"It was incumbent on Alexander to vanquish Napoleon, under pain of forfeiting his crown and

his life. His long refusal to break with France had excited distrust in all classes of his subjects, and rendered him unpopular. In the heart of his dominions there existed a redoubtable party, which was only watching for a favorable opportunity to hurl from the throne the liberal Czar, who had dared to conceive the generous idea of emancipating the serfs. To Alexander's predilection for Napoleon were attributed the injuries inflicted upon commerce by the continental system: that system, it was affirmed, had proved ruinous to Russia, and favorable only to France, to whom breach of faith was said to be mere matter of sport. These alleged grievances, forcibly represented by a popular military commander, made a ready impression on the multitude. The upper classes, too, joined in the outcry against France; but their complaints were grounded in mere pretext.

"During the few last months of my sojourn in St. Petersburg, how frequently did Alexander make me the confidant of his anxious feelings! England, the implacable enemy of France, maintained secret agents at the court of Russia for the purpose of stirring up disaffection and discontent around the throne. The English cabinet was well aware that a propaganda war was impossible as long as Russia should continue allied to France. On this point all the powers agreed; and the consequence was, that all the sovereigns were perjured, one only excepted; he was to be seduced from his allegiance, or doomed to destruction.

"Alexander, at the period to which I am now referring, was no longer a gay thoughtless young man. The circumstances by which he found himself surrounded had forced a train of serious reflection on his mind, and he seemed perfectly

to understand the peculiarity of his personal position. In his private conversations with me he often said many things which he would not have said to his own brothers, and which possibly he could not have said with safety to his ministers. Beneath an exterior air of confidence he concealed the most gloomy apprehensions. In short, matters had reached that point when it would have been very impolitic in the Emperor to have renewed those evening visits, in which he was wont to impart to me his love secrets, and to relate the jealous torments inflicted on him by the coquettish Madame N——.

"In the irritated state of feeling which then pervaded the public mind in Russia, Alexander's intimacy with the French ambassador was severely reprehended, and he knew it. We sometimes enjoyed a hearty laugh at finding ourselves compelled to make assignations with as much secrecy as two young lovers. 'My dear Caulincourt,' said Alexander to me one evening, when we were conversing on the balcony of the Empress' apartments,—'My dear Caulincourt, in all my vast dominions I have not a single friend to whom I can lay open my heart. I cannot impart my secret inquietudes to the French ambassador; but let me confide them to your honour. Napoleon ought to be made acquainted with the plots that are hatching here against him. I have concealed nothing from you, my dear duke. In my confidence, I have perhaps overstepped the limits of strict propriety. 'Tell your emperor all that I have revealed to you; tell him all that you have seen and read; tell him that here the earth trembles beneath my feet; that here, in my own empire, he has rendered my position intolerable by his violation of

treaties. Transmit to him, from me, this candid and final declaration:—If once the war be fairly entered upon, either he, Napoleon, or I, Alexander, must lose our crown.'

"I fulfilled the mission entrusted to me; I braved anger and reproaches; I combatted, at the risk of my own ruin, all the reasons urged as a pretext for the war of 1812. In a warm discussion with Napoleon, in which I had vainly exhausted all my best arguments, being pushed to the extremity by some expressions which fell from him, I replied:—Sire, my life is at your service. Dispose of it on the field of battle for the sacred cause of France. But here my conviction is at variance with yours. My conscience and my honour belong only to myself! and I should consider myself dishonoured if, for the sake of pleasing your Majesty, I were to desert the cause of my country.

"'What have you to say, sir?' said he, advancing eagerly to me.

"I repeat to your Majesty, whilst there is yet time, that this war must inevitably be attended by results fatal to France; that all the powers of Europe have risen in a mass against one. If you pursue this course, Sire, you are lost; and on you depends the fate of France.

"Six months after this scene, I again found myself closeted with the Emperor, not in the palace of the Tuileries, but in the ancient palace of the Czars, the Kremlin at Moscow! It was miraculous! Inexplicable fate had impressed a terrible seal on my despised warnings! Whether the Emperor then remembered our discussions, and my obstinate resistance to his arguments, I cannot pretend to say, but he knew that he could never lose my attachment—my absolute devotedness, and in the day of misfortune

he confidently relied on them. I endeavored to mitigate the anxiety which preyed upon his mind. I kept up the train of conversation, for I knew Napoleon well: the outpouring of his feelings, when it could be brought about, never failed to produce a soothing effect on his mind. But his meditative organisation inclined him to suppress his sensations, and he was often reserved on subjects in which his thoughts and feelings were deeply engaged. The student of Brienne and the sub-lieutenant of artillery had acquaintances, but no friends. Napoleon had never shared any of those intimacies which are almost inseparable from boyhood and youth. His elevated fortune wrought no change in his vigorous and unbending mind, which always retained its character of self-concentration. He was attached to Berthier and Duroc; they were almost the only two men with whom he was familiar; but even with them he was not communicative and intimate. With me, on the contrary, he was not *familiar*, and yet when we were together, his conversation was so unreserved that he might be said to think aloud, though I not unfrequently ventured to contradict him. When Napoleon could be himself he was invariably sincere and amiable.

"I sought to impress upon the Emperor that our late victories afforded us the chance of receiving overtures of peace from Russia. I confess that I had not myself any faith in the probability of such an occurrence; but my object was to restore Napoleon to that tranquillity of mind which was so necessary in our fearful position. 'No, Caulincourt,' replied he, 'neither you nor I can be blind to the fatal consequences of this fanatical and desperate war. The re-

sources which our enemies employ annihilate my conquests with more certainty than fire and sword.'

"Having related to you some details connected with the battle of Moscow," said the duke, "I will take the opportunity of contradicting an assertion which has recently obtained some degree of credit among that class of people who eagerly seize on every circumstance that can be interpreted to the prejudice of the Emperor.

"There is no truth whatever in the statement that Napoleon proposed that I should go on a mission to the Emperor Alexander; and that I declined doing so. In the first place, the Emperor never could have conceived the idea of sending one of the officers of the crown as the bearer of a letter to Alexander. If the amicable propositions of Napoleon had been acceded to, there would have been ground for stipulating a treaty of peace; in that case, my services might have been useful, and I should have considered myself honored in being chosen as negotiator. But circumstances did not admit of an official plenipotentiary being sent from the French camp to St. Petersburg. My refusal, therefore, has no existence, save in the imaginations of the authors of this fiction. The same may be said of the coolness which it has been alleged I evinced towards the Emperor, and the pretended ground for which was my disapproval of the campaign against Russia. I certainly exerted my efforts to prevent it; but this fatal step being once taken, the idea of reproaching him for his error would have been most base, amidst the host of misfortunes that overwhelmed him. That was the moment when every man of honor felt him-

self bound to repay, by blind and unrestricted devotedness, the benefits Napoleon had heaped on us in the days of his prosperity.

"The bearer of the private letter from Napoleon to Alexander, was General Lauriston. Neither the Emperor nor I expected that it would be attended by any favorable result. The fact is, that the Emperor, who felt himself responsible for the fate of the army, nobly sacrificed his pride to his conscience. This humiliation was a necessity which he would fain have spared by his own blood. The circumstance, which has been made a subject of reproach, was one of the noblest traits in Napoleon's career.

"But to return to my narrative:—Night was drawing in. The Emperor, who continued in a very disturbed state of mind, restlessly paced up and down the room, and now and then threw himself for a few moments into a chair.

"'Go to bed, Caulincourt,' said he, in a tone of mingled grief and kindness.

"No, Sire," said I, "I cannot. Permit me to remain with your Majesty.'

"He stretched out his hand to me.

"'Be it so, then, my dear Caulincourt. But let us do something to amuse ourselves. (He spread out the plans of his movements.) Look here,' said he, 'in three days I shall have two hundred and fifty thousand men assembled here. They must find quarters. We must look after provisions. But desolation and famine everywhere stare us in the face!

"At that moment a vivid light flashed across the windows. We rose, and on looking out, observed a red flaming light on the horizon. There was a suffocating heat in the atmosphere. Cries of fire! fire! were raised in the courts of the

Kremlin in which our guards were bivouacked; and with these cries were mingled shouts of *Vive l'Empereur!* The brave fellows were anxious to prove that they were at their posts and watching over the safety of their Emperor. On the preceding night there had been some partial fires, which Marshal Mortier, then Governor of Moscow, had attributed to the disorder inseparable from the installation of the troops.

"A staff officer entered and informed us that fires had simultaneously broken out in different quarters of the city, and likewise in several unoccupied buildings within the enclosure of the palace. Several generals successively brought in reports, all coinciding one with another. The truth was no longer doubtful. The destruction of Moscow had been regularly planned and ordered.

"The Emperor in a moment summoned all his presence of mind and dignity. In a firm and decided tone he gave orders for rendering assistance on those points which were threatened, but not yet reached, by the flames. 'Prevent the different fires from communicating,' said he, 'and save every thing that can be rescued. Be gone, gentlemen; I make each commander of a corps responsible for the execution of my orders. Every one must do his duty. Let my horse be got ready, and acquaint my troops that I shall be amongst them instantly.' He sent for the Prince de Neufchâtel:—'Berthier,' said he, 'where are the corn magazines situated? Despatch an intelligent officer, and direct him to report to me whether the corn magazines are in danger. Let the young guard be sent on this duty. Quick, Berthier! Let no time be lost.'

"When we were again alone, he said to me—

'Truly, Caulincourt, this exceeds all belief; they are absolutely waging a war of extermination. These atrocious measures have no precedent in the annals of civilisation. The execration of generations to come will light on the perpetrators of this vandalism. To burn their own cities! Good Heaven!' Whilst the Emperor uttered these hasty and broken sentences, he was in a violent state of excitement; a gloomy lustre kindled in his eyes. 'These Russians,' continued he, 'must be inspired by Satan. What a ferocious crime is here committed.'

"At that hour, I am convinced Napoleon's death-blow was struck! His moral energy was unsubdued, but his physical energies gradually gave way. The first thread of his existence was snapped at the Kremlin; his death-knell was tolled at St. Helena! Such emotions are deadly in their consequences. I know it by fatal experience!

"Next day," continued the duke, "the Emperor, as usual, inspected his guards in the Kremlin, and no one could read in his placid countenance any trace of the anxious perturbation he had suffered on the preceding night. The fact is, that Napoleon was eminently endowed with that quality so indispensable to a sovereign—dissimulation. A monarch must smile even when his crown of thorns causes the blood to trickle down the forehead that bears it. He must smile when every golden dream has vanished, and every bright illusion is dispelled. He must smile, because, on the moral confidence of each of his subjects depends the welfare of all. Alas! that smile is one of the hardest conditions attached to the miseries of a throne!

"Attempts have been made to censrue or

ridicule the reviews which took place amidst the smoking ashes of Moscow, the decrees issued from the Kremlin, &c. This is the very height of absurdity. At the distance of 800 leagues from the capital, it was necessary to prove that the power of the Emperor was still predominant. It was necessary to convince the army, that whether near or afar off, he was watching over all, and for all—that in Moscow our troops were merely in a conquered province, and holding free communication with their homes and their families. This faith helped our brave troops to endure the pangs of hunger, and the mortification of reverses, so bitterly felt by men hitherto acquainted only with victory. The hope of a triumphant return was indispensable to counteract that depression of spirit, which, like a hideous leprosy, spares neither the strong nor the brave.

When, in the streets of Moscow, I beheld Napoleon passing between lines of flame, and amidst showers of fire, calmly braving the most imminent danger for the sake of assisting, by his personal efforts, in saving a corn magazine or an hospital, I viewed his intrepidity as an act of high policy. When he thus braved danger and death in the burning streets of Moscow, I have heard the soldiers who accompanied him express their confidence, even in the most perilous situations, that no harm could befal them whilst the Emperor was there to extricate them. The truth is, that Napoleon was greater and more magnificent in his reverses than when he astonished the world by his brilliant triumphs.

"During fourteen days and nights which followed the disasters of Moscow, I am enabled to affirm, that never, under any circumstances, did I see him manifest such heroic magnanimity.

Seated by my side, in a narrow sledge, exposed to every kind of danger, suffering severely from cold and often from hunger—for we could not stop any where—leaving behind him the scattered wreck of his army, Napoleon's courage never forsook him! Yet his spirit was not buoyed up by any illusory hope. He had sounded the depth of the abyss. His eagle eye had scanned the prospect before him. 'Caulincourt,' said he, 'this is a serious state of things; but rest assured, my courage will not flinch. My star is overclouded, but all is not lost. The French are essentially a noble and brave people. I will raise national guards. That institution of the national guard is one of the greatest achievements of the Revolution. It is a resource of which I shall successfully avail myself. In three months I shall have on foot a million of armed citizens, and three hundred thousand fine troops of the line.'

"True, Sire," said I, "You may rely on France.

"'My allies,' interrupted he, earnestly, 'are numbered in my plans, but that is all. For the last six months, Caulincourt, they have been nothing but an embarrassment to me. Their co-operation is a mere mockery!

"'But,' he resumed, after a few moments' pause, 'France is still invincible! France presents great resources. The French are the most intellectual people in the world. My twenty-ninth bulletin is not a ball fired at random—it is an act of well-concerted policy. In some circumstances, truth and candor are the best *finesse*. French intelligence will comprehend the position of the nation, and the vast sacrifices which that position demands. I, the Emperor, am only a man; but all Frenchmen know that on that man

depend the destinies of their country, the destinies of their families, and the safety of their homes. Fools have attempted to give a ridiculous interpretation to a remark of Louis XIV, who said, *l'Etat, c'est moi.* These words convey an undeniable truth; they imply a power of will, without which a king is but a gilded mannikin. The state is an assemblage of undisciplined men, who soon become undisciplinable if they be not restrained by a hand of iron. *Monsieur le Russe,'* added he, good-humoredly, 'are you not of my opinion?'

"Your Majesty," replied I, "knows how much I am mortified by being addressed by that title.'

"Ah, baste!' said he, and changed the subject of conversation.

"Napoleon," continued the duke, "persisted in regarding the constant efforts I had made since 1810 to prevent him from coming to a rupture with Alexander, his most devoted and faithful ally, merely as promoted by a predilection on my part in favor of the Emperor of Russia. In my correspondence, and subsequently in conversation, I explained to him the political circumstances which rendered the Russian alliance the strongest support of France. I owed to the generous confidence of Alexander communications of a nature which plainly indicated the storm that was gathering round us. I had read, with my own eyes, during my mission in Russia, propositions which Alexander daily received from the other powers, even from the Austrian Cabinet, to rise *en masse* against the domination of the *insatiable Corsican.* I told the Emperor all this. I offered him proofs of its truth; but he would not listen to me, and he always cut the matter short by saying, '*Monsieur le Russe,*

Alexander is an enchanter, who has cast a spell upon you.'

"By throwing himself into Russia with an army of five hundred thousand men, he hoped to take the other powers by surprise. But they had been conspiring for four years previously, and for the space of a year all their measures had been completed. My warnings were vain! In 1811, when I demanded my recall, it was in the hope of being able to avert the storm which then seemed ready to burst over us. In one of my last interviews with the Emperor of Russia, he said to me, 'Tell the Emperor Napoleon that I will not separate from him unless he force me to do so. My friendship for him is so sincere, that I cannot withdraw it.' This was absolutely true: Alexander cherished for Napoleon a passionate friendship—an enthusiastic admiration.

"Napoleon was under the influence of a fixed idea, and he would not deviate from the plan he had laid down. He did not place faith in the sincerity of the communication made to me for the purpose of being conveyed to him. Could he not understand the generosity of Alexander? I know not; but his doubts, whether real or dissembled, produced fatal results."

CHAPTER V.

Picturesque scenery round Plombières—*Thérèse la folle*—The lunatic hospital at Pyrna—The mad girl in love with Napoleon—The Emperor's remarks on madness and suicide—Val-Dajon—Details relating to the death of the Duke d'Enghien—Colonel Caulincourt the bearer of despatches to Bavaria—The Duke d'Enghien conveyed from Strasburg to Paris—Colonel Caulincourt's interviews with the Elector of Bavaria—Description of the Elector—Madame Von Reich—Execution of the Duke d'Enghien—Letter from the Emperor Alexander to the Duke de Vicenza—Sharp reply of the Emperor Alexander to Louis XVIII.—The Emperor Alexander invites the Duke de Vicenza to retire to Russia—Interesting particulars which the Duke promises to relate.

THE conversations we enjoyed during our morning drives and walks with the Duke de Vicenza, always turned on subjects less serious than those which we discussed in the evenings. Autumn evenings seem naturally to excite feelings of melancholy and regret—a regret inseparable from the consciousness that the bright days of summer have left us. We usually employed our mornings in exploring the environs of the town. The country about Plombières is well wooded and picturesquely varied by alternate hill and dale. We continually met gay parties riding or walking. The cavalcade of asses reminded us of Montmorency and its rural amusements. Anguish, whether of mind or body, is temporarily assuaged by the influence of objects which please the eye. The sight of a graceful and smiling landscape lulls the mind to tranquillity and repose.

One day, whilst we were strolling about, we were accosted by a poor crazy female, known in the neighborhood by the name of *Thérése la folle.* She served to divert those thoughtless persons who can derive amusement from the most melancholy affliction to which human nature is subject. Poor Thérése was gentle and inoffensive in her madness. To every person she met she addressed inquiries respecting the Empress, and when asked to whom she alluded, she would reply, with a *naive* air of surprise, "The Empress of Plombières, to be sure." We were informed that one of Thérése's sons had been inscribed on the conscription list during the time that the Empress Josephine was on a visit to Plombières. Thérése implored her Majesty's intercession to get her son exempt from service. This favor, however, exceeded the bounds of the Empress' power; it was a point on which Napoleon was inexorable. But though her Majesty could not obtain a soldier's exemption from service, she could purchase a substitute. Josephine, ever kind and generous, gave the money, and the son of Thérése remained to comfort his mother. This circumstance occurred several years before Thérése was visited by her melancholy affliction; but though bereft of reason, the poor mother retained the remembrance of her benefactress.

"Our rencontre with this maniac," said the Duke de Vicenza, "reminds me of a circumstance which occurred at our entrance into Pyrna in 1813. On that occasion we were obliged to remove the patients from the lunatic hospital to make room for our wounded troops. Indispensable as this measure was, yet the Emperor reluctantly saw it adopted. He sent to inquire how the unfortunate lunatics had been disposed

of. The town was completely filled with our troops, and they were temporarily lodged in one of the churches. Among the lunatics, there was a woman who fanced herself the mother of God. On entering the church, she installed herself in the chapel of the Virgin, and did the honors as a lady would in her own drawing-room. 'How happy I am,' said she, 'at finding myself removed to the house of my son. Offer my thanks to Bonaparte, sir,' said she, addressing herself to a French officer. 'Tell him he will be welcome here. My son and I expect a visit from him.'

"Another patient, a very beautiful young lady, connected with a family of rank, had fallen in love with Napoleon during the wars of 1807. She would not answer to any other name than *Napoleonida.* During her removal from the hospital to the church, the sight of the French uniform appeared to make a forcible impression on her, and she expressed an earnest wish to see *her Napoleon.* With her long fair hair dishevelled, her eyes suffused with tears, and her hands joined, she ran about imploring every one she met to conduct her to Napoleon. She repeated this request with indefatigable perseverance to every officer who visited the church in which the lunatics were lodged. Turenne, the Emperor's equerry, related the story of the unfortunate young lady to his Majesty, and asked whether he would be pleased to see her. 'By no means, Turenne,' replied the Emperor, smiling. 'I have lunatics enough in France, without troubling my head about those of Bohemia.'

"I accompanied the Emperor (I think in 1807) on a visit to the *Maison Royale* at Charenton. He inspected the establishment in its most minute details, made inquiries into all the

remedies that had been tried, and all the cases which presented a probable chance of recovery. He was much interested by this visit, and when he left the Maison Royale he gave particular orders that 'the poor lunatics should be treated kindly.'

"On his return from Charènton, the Emperor seemed thoughtful. 'This visit,' said he to me, 'has made me melancholy. Insanity is a frightful degradation of human nature. I shall never go mad, that is certain. My head is of iron (this is an expression which he often employed). Despair, indeed, is another thing! I have fixed ideas upon that subject. Some time or other, Caulincourt, it is possible you may hear that I have deprived myself of life, but never that I have lost my senses.'

"He reminded me of these words," pursued the duke, "in the terrible night we spent at Fontainebleau in 1814. 'This idea,' he said, 'occurred to me when I was at Charenton. I then felt convinced that it would be better to die than to become an object of pity.'

"Moscow, Chatillon, Fontainebleau, and the Hundred Days," added the Duke de Vicenza, "are nightmares which incessantly haunt my restless couch."

That day the Duke appeared unwell and low-spirited, and I proposed an excursion to Val-Dajon, which is about a league from Plombières. The duke acceded to this proposal, and we set out.

Val-Dajon scarcely deserves the name of a hamlet. It consists merely of a few little houses scattered over the slopes of a chain of hills, the hills themselves being crowned with thickly shaded groves. The Val is all verdure and

freshness, and neat little white houses, roofed with varnished tiles, glitter here and there in the sun. The lower meadows, which are intersected by a pellucid stream, afford delightful pasture for numbers of cows, sheep, and goats. Here and there groups of laughing children are seen dancing and playing on the grass; or a young girl, with a jar of water on her head, is seen slowly and cautiously ascending the slope between the stream and the houses. Here a few poor but happy families live and die, circumscribed within the funnel-shaped valley called Val-Dajon.

The Duke de Vicenza, Colonel R——, and myself, took our seats on some wooden benches, which are fixed on the hills overlooking the charming scene; and we began, in philosophic style, to discuss the inexhaustible theme of comparative happiness. As I looked down upon the smiling valley, I thought that in that tranquil spot I might recover my health and pass the remainder of my days without bestowing a regret on the noisy pleasures of town life. I forgot that Val-Dajon, then so verdant and smiling, was during eight months of the year enveloped in snow.

"No doubt," said the Duke de Vicenza, whose taste was probably less pastoral than mine, "no doubt these people are happy, but we could not be happy on the same conditions. Theirs is a negative, a purely material, sort of happiness, which would not accord with our tastes and habits, and would fall very far short of our intellectual wants. Enjoyments are relative to the character of the individual, to his tastes, his sensations, his passions. . . . ."

At this moment we were joined by M. de

N———, who, like ourselves was a visitor to Plombières. The Colonel and M. de N——— went to take a walk together, and I remained in conversation with the duke.

I had observed that he was that day unusually thoughtful and low-spirited, and I had endeavored, by leading the conversation to other subjects, to divert him from those recollections which invariably tended to increase his melancholy; but he always returned, as it were involuntarily to the events of the empire.

"There was a period of my life," said he, after a long and meditative pause, "when I felt myself wanting in that sort of moral courage which enables a man to make the greatest of all sacrifices—the sacrifice of those objects which have been the fondest dreams of youthful ambition. In the consciousness of the rectitude of my own conduct, I braved a host of injustice and prejudice which fed the gossip of the Parisian *salons*. When events brought about the downfal of the man to whom I owed my elevation, the odious accusations of which I had been the object were once more revived. I trust, Madame, that you do not believe me to be the odious wretch I have been represented?"

I was struck with the hurried and anxious tone in which this interrogation was addressed to me. The too famous mission to Ettenheim was a subject which I should have cautiously refrained from touching on, though I was fully convinced of the injustice of the animosity cherished by a certain party against the Duke de Vicenza. I had heard the affair variously described, and I was naturally curious to hear the details from the duke himself. When he asked me whether I belived the reports circulated against him, the

question at first disconcerted me, but soon recovering my presence of mind, I replied—

"I was very young at the time of the Duke d'Enghien's death. I heard the affair spoken of for the first time in 1814. Opinions appeared to me to be divided on the subject. You had accusers, duke, it is true, but at the same time you had honorable and zealous defenders. For my own part, I never could believe you guilty of the iniquity laid to your charge. I judged you by the previous course of your life, which was unsullied by any act of dishonor. I could easily discern that your enemies, in conjuring up this accusation, masked the real motives of the malignity they cherished towards Napoleon's grand equerry. The negotiations of Chatillon, and subsequently of Fontainebleau, your strenuous efforts to preserve the crown for the son of the Emperor, were, I verily believe, the real causes of the hatred and malice of which you have been the object. These causes, too, provoked the warm defence made by your friends. General Leval, to whom the despatches of which you were the bearer were addressed, rendered you signal justice."

"He did; but still he converted only those persons who were just and unbiassed."

"Party spirit," observed I, "is blind and prejudiced. Time will render you justice by proving the fallacy of the odious accusation. You have secured to yourself a glorious claim to the sympathy of your countrymen by your useful intervention in the affairs of France, and your intrepid devotedness to Napoleon. The day will come when your name will never be uttered without feelings of respect by both friends and enemies."

"I declare upon my honor," said the duke, proudly rearing his head, "that my conscience is free from all self-reproach. I will acquaint you with the real facts of this unfortunate affair as far as I was personally concerned.

"In the year X, I was Colonel of the 2d Carabineers, and I was appointed aide-de-camp to the First Consul. This appointment was conferred without favor, and merely in consideration of seniority of rank, according to the rule then observed. The First Consul, General Bonaparte, as he was called, was a few years older than I, and he was the object of my enthusiastic admiration. I recollect that I thought him very good-looking, though I should have been laughed at by my comrades had I expressed that opinion in their hearing, for at that time he was certainly anything but handsome.

"I was devotedly attached to my general, and would have followed him through every privation and danger; I would have laid down my life for him; and yet he had at that time done nothing for me. His manners were not remarkably friendly or social; and he was so rigidly strict in all that regarded military duty, that no one dared venture on the least infraction of his orders; yet I refused the rank of general to remain attached to his person as colonel aide-de-camp. None but military men can understand the full extent of this sacrifice on the part of a colonel of seven-and-twenty. During the Consulate and the Republic, I certainly had no foresight of the miracles of the empire. How am I to account for the pure friendship, the devotedness, I felt for a man who had never even shaken hands with me? We feel, but we cannot explain, the power of attraction.

"The First Consul had never yet distinguished me from my comrades, and in truth I had as yet done nothing that could have justified a preference. One evening, to my surprise, he sent for me. I can fancy I see him now seated at a little wooden desk, painted black, which he was cutting in every direction with his pen-knife. He looked at me for a few moments, and then said:

"'Colonel Caulincourt, you are to set out to-night for Bavaria. On your way you will deliver these despatches to General Leval, the Commandant of the Strasburg division. Sit down, and listen attentively to what I have to say. There is a letter to the Elector of Bavaria. You are not to let it out of your possession, but deliver it to the Elector in person. This letter contains certain demands, and you must insist on their being conceded within four-and-twenty hours. You understand, Colonel—within four-and-twenty hours!' As he uttered these words, his eyes looked searchingly into mine, as if he wished to read in them the assurance of my determination to execute his orders.

"'I will explain to you,' resumed he, 'the spirit of the despatches of which you are the bearer. There is at present at the little court of Bavaria, an English Chargé de'Affaires, named Drake. I know that this man has been engaged in plots and intrigues against the French government. I also know that there is a certain Baroness von Reich, who has set herself at the head of the French emigrants, and that she and Drake are organising conspiracies against my life.—Wherever plots are carried on against France, England has her hirelings at work.

"'I require, first, that the Elector of Bavaria shall dismiss Drake from his court within twenty-

four hours after the receipt of my letter; secondly, that the intriguing Baroness von Reich, shall be removed from Munich. If my demands are not complied with, I shall find myself compelled immediately to send a military force into the Bavarian territory. Now, Colonel Caulincourt, you perceive the importance of your mission. Do not permit any tergiversation, and accept no compromise. These petty princes of the Rhine must be taught to respect France. Weakness emboldens conspirators. Munich and some other places that I could name, are the hot-beds of base machinations against France. All this must be brought to an end.

"'The despatch which you will deliver on your way to General Leval, contains directions for him to place troops at your disposal, in case you should be forced to employ them. Ordener will have the command of these troops—he will be on the spot, and you must return immediately to render me an account of what has been done. You understand. Drake must receive his passports four-and-twenty hours after your arrival at Munich. Go, Colonel Caulincourt, fulfil your mission with speed and intelligence.'

"As I was leaving his cabinet, he called me back and said—'Caulincourt, take with you your uniform of colonel aide-de-camp. Those people yonder must be taught to respect the French uniform.'

"I was young and ardent," pursued the Duke of Vicenza, "and I was not a little flattered by the mark of confidence conferred on me by the First Consul. Four hours after my interview with him, I was on the road to Germany, seated in a light cabriolet, drawn by two post-horses and preceded by a courier. I had not allowed

myself time to bid adieu to my family. Just as I was stepping into my cabriolet, I saw one of my friends approaching to speak to me; I asked him to seat himself beside me, that we might chat together as we drove along. I informed him that I had been entrusted with a mission by the First Consul, that I was on my way to Germany, and begged him to communicate the circumstance to my family and our mutual friends. The First Consul had not enjoined me to observe secrecy, and I did not conceive that I was guilty of any indiscretion in vaguely mentioning the place of my destination. But fate ordained that these few words, addressed to a friend who happened accidentally to meet me at the moment of departure, should be attended with a fatal result. My absence was remarked in those circles of society in which I was in the habit of mixing. On the night of my departure from Paris, another individual, who was the bearer of despatches from the war-office, set off on a journey to Germany. On our arrival at Strasburg, which probably we both reached nearly at the same time, we each presented our despatches to General Leval.—Without stopping, I proceeded straight to Offenburg, and the probability is that a few hours afterwards there departed from Strasburg a superior officer, a colonel of gendarmerie, and three hundred troops, who effected at Ettenheim the fatal arrest of the Duke d'Enghien.

"When the unfortunate Prince reached Strasburg, orders were given that he should be conducted to Paris. General Leval afterwards informed me that he lent some money and clothes to the duke, who was arrested at night, and was not allowed time even to pack a portmanteau.—The despatches from the war-minister enjoined

the most absolute secrecy on General Leval, who forwarded his prisoner to Paris, without suspecting that he was sending him to receive sentence of death.

"Chance might have decreed that I should have been the individual entrusted with the despatches relating to the Duke d'Enghien; and, like the person who had the misfortune to be the bearer of them, I should have delivered the letters in the most perfect ignorance of their contents. But the fact is, they were not consigned to me.

"I reached Munich on the night of the 2d of March, 1804. At eight on the following morning I wrote to the Elector, requesting the honor of an audience, and stating that I had orders to deliver into his own hands some important despatches entrusted to me by the First Consul. Several hours elapsed and I received no answer. I was reflecting on what it would be best for me to do, when one of the Elector's chamberlains waited on me. 'Colonel,' said he, 'I am sent by my sovereign with orders to conduct you to the palace.'

"We stepped into a carriage which was waiting at the door. Not a word was exchanged between the chamberlain and myself as we drove along. Having ushered me into a small audience-chamber, my guide bowed and withdrew. I waited alone for about a quarter of an hour. The Elector then entered, attended by three gentlemen. I presented to him the First Consul's letter. He took it from me, and read it rapidly. I attentively observed his countenance. He turned very red, and the paper trembled in his hands. He glanced it over a second time, and having endeavored to collect himself, he turned

to me, and said, in a voice faltering with emotion—

"'Colonel, you shall have my answer this evening.'

"I bowed and withdrew without uttering a single word. At the door of the audience-chamber I found the chamberlain who had brought me to the palace. We stepped into the carriage; he accompanied me to my abode, and took his leave.

"When I entered my apartment I could not repress a hearty fit of laughter. This German formality and silence appeared to me extremely amusing. I refrained from going out, lest my perambles about the city should give rise to absurd suspicions; and I do not think I was ever so weary of my life as during the interval I remained a prisoner in my hotel at Munich.

"At ten o'clock in the evening the chamberlain again called on me. He observed the same formality and silence as before. I was conducted to the presence of the Elector. He was the very beau ideal of phlegmatic German aristocracy. Still, to render him justice, the Prince was not wanting in a certain degree of dignity, and I have no doubt that in his social relations he was a kind and amiable man. When I was ushered into his presence I found him alone, and he informed me 'that the *commands* of the First Consul of the French Republic were in their nature very painful to him; that the First Consul had been misinformed; that neither Mr. Drake, the Baroness von Reich, nor any other person in his states, had conspired against the French Republic; that the First Consul, by requiring the immediate removal of the Minister Drake, placed Bavaria in a very unpleasant position in relation

to a friendly power, England; that he, the Elector, would ascertain whether there were any grounds for dismissing the English minister, by directing his police to institute inquiries respecting the imputed machinations against France; that those machinations were unjustly imputed to Mr. Drake; and that, finally, if it should be proved that he had conspired against the French Republic, the violent measure required by the First Consul would be justified, *to a certain point*, in the eyes of his ally, England.'

"The Elector spoke slowly and hesitatingly, and he thus gave me time to arrange my answer. I stated that it was not for me to judge of the accuracy of the information received by the First Consul respecting Mr. Drake and the Baroness Reich; that the object of my mission was to obtain complete satisfaction; and that my orders were to see that the demands of my government were complied with within four-and-twenty hours after the delivery of my despatch.

"'But, Colonel,' resumed the Elector, 'the First Consul can scarcely expect that I should, at so short a notice, obey so arbitrary a demand, and one that sets at defiance the law of nations.'

"I have the honor to observe to the Elector," replied I, "that I cannot comment on the orders of my government, and that it is not in my power to modify the terms of my mission.'

"'The First Consul shall be obeyed, sir,' answered the Elector, drily. He then bowed, and I withdrew.

"I had experienced no little difficulty in maintaining my gravity during this conversation.—Every time the poor Elector pronounced the words *French Republic*, they seemed almost to

choke him, and he made the most ridiculous grimace imaginable.

"Next day (4th of March, 1804), Mr. Drake was dismissed, the Baroness von Reich left Munich and I sat out on my return to France. I stopped at Strasburg merely to change horses, and then hurried on to Paris.

"I was elated at my success. This was the first mission on which I had been employed, and I felt a pride in serving General Bonaparte, who knew so well how to enforce respect to France. In my own family I had had to contend against a host of prejudices, and I had experienced no little difficulty in subduing the disapprobation caused by my attachment to *little General Bonaparte.*

"Thus vanity prompted me, on my return, to boast of the success of my mission. I entered Paris at six o'clock in the morning. At that early hour I could not of course present myself at the Tuileries. I drove to the residence of Madame de * * *, an old friend of my mother. There I heard of the death of the Duke d'Enghien, who had been arrested at Ettenheim, and shot at Vincennes. I was seized with a thrill of horror. I immediately perceived the interpretation that might be given to my mission to the Rhine. The coincidence was singular, and to me most unfortunate.

"On the night on which I left Strasburg for Offenburg, the officer who was directed to arrest the Duke d'Enghien set off from Strasburg to Ettenheim. He, with the despatches consigned to his charge, departed from and returned to Paris unperceived; whilst I had incautiously announced my departure in *salons* in which the death of the unfortunate Duke d'Enghien excited cries of horror. I felt that an odious suspicion must

light upon me, and I was so overcome by my feelings that I fell senseless on the floor.

"I will not express my opinion on the affair of Ettenheim. My tongue shall never utter a censure on Napoleon. When I cannot praise or admire him, I will be silent. I cannot concur in the opinion of that individual who has said, 'It was worse than a crime—it was a fault.' The execution of the Duke d'Enghien was a two-fold misfortune. It was the specious cause of the first war between France and Russia; the pretence for that war being the violation of the territory of the Grand Duke of Baden, the father-in-law of the Emperor Alexander.

"I had no share in the catastrophe which cast a gloom over what would otherwise have been the happiest period of my life. The only reproach that I can make to myself is, that I did not bow my head beneath the thunder-bolts which were hurled against me.

"By resigning my appointment of aide-de-camp to the First Consul, and thus openly avowing my indignation at the affair of Ettenheim, I should have cleared myself of a false and odious imputation. But in so doing I must have renounced the brilliant career which I saw opening before me, and repressed the glowing enthusiasm which animated my heart. I was young and ambitious; conscious that my honor was unsullied, and that I had no cause of self-reproach, I boldly defied my accusers. The high position which I subsequently attained, and the favors which the Emperor heaped upon me, all tended to corroborate the malignant imputations.

"My real crime, that for which persons of my own caste will never pardon me, is, that in 1814 I dared to dispute inch by inch the rights of the

son of Napoleon; and to wrest from the allied powers a few leagues of sovereignty for the greatest man of modern times—for him who had possessed the world, and whose very name shook to their foundations all the old thrones of Europe. My crime was, that in 1815 I aided and assisted my benefactor by every means in my power.

"In the discharge of my political duties I listened to the dictates of feeling, and for this courtiers will never pardon me. Viewing with disdain the miserable passions of the day, I retired to my estate in the country, and devoted myself to the education of my sons. The death of the Emperor Alexander, has destroyed my last dream of future happiness.

"When I was appointed ambassador to Russia, I wrote to the Emperor, to whom I had been personally known since the period of my first mission to St. Petersburg. I knew not what opinion he might have formed of my conduct in reference to the affair of Ettenheim. The Emperor's answer was—

"'I made every inquiry of my ministers, who were residing in Germany at the time; and I ascertained that you had no participation whatever in the sad affair. If I entertained the slightest doubt on this subject, there is no power *celestial* or *terrestrial*, which could induce me to receive you. At the time of your first mission to my court, you and I were both very young; but from the opinion I formed of your character and disposition, I could have vouched that you were incapable of an act of dishonor.'

"I have this letter written in the Emperor Alexander's own hand. I had written to him without soliciting the permission of the Emperor Napoleon. But his police served him well, and

I took no pains to keep the matter secret. Whether it ever reached his knowledge, I cannot say; but he never mentioned it to me. If he had, I should candidly have acknowledged the fact, and I feel assured that he would have understood my motives, and would not have blamed me. It is a remarkable fact, considering the intimate relations existing between us, that the name of the Duke d'Enghien was never mentioned in our conversations. Whatever may have been said or written on the subject, I am convinced that the event left a deep wound in the heart of Napoleon. I am also convinced that the favors with which he overwhelmed me were in a great degree dictated by feelings of justice. He was anxious to repair as far as possible the injury I had suffered through the coincidence of my mission to Munich and the affair of Ettenheim. Certainly he never planned the affair for the sake of compromising me. I was not a person of sufficient importance to make it worth his while to resort to such a scheme.

"In spite of public clamor, I will boldly render homage to the noble character of the Emperor of Russia, not because he treated me kindly, but because his noble nature is a fact which impartial history must acknowledge. Alexander warmly defended me to Louis XVIII, against the aspersions cast upon me in relation to the affair of the Duke d'Enghien; and he did not relinquish the subject until he received the assurance that the King was convinced of my innocence. But it was of little avail. Louis XVIII was of a sardonic turn, and becoming impatient at the Emperor Alexander's enumeration of my merits, he terminated the conference by saying—

"'I trust that my brother of Russia does not

intend proposing that M. Bonaparte's Grand Equerry should fill at my court the post of the Prince de Lambese?'

"Alexander was piqued, and answered carelessly—

"'Oh! by no means! His Majesty the King of France knows as well as the meanest peasant in his dominions, that in making a bargain between two persons, it is necessary that both should agree.'

"Louis XVIII felt the force of this rebuke, and I believe he never liked me for it.

"I learned these particulars from the Emperor Alexander himself. 'My dear Caulincourt,' added he, with great warmth of manner, 'come and reside at the court of Russia. You shall there find a friend in me; and your sons shall be established in a way which they cannot hope for in France. The Bourbons are convinced of your innocence, but they wish to let suspicion still attach to you—that serves their policy. Besides, they are aware that in the conferences of April 1814, you powerfully defended the interests of your unfortunate master, and I can assure you it depended on the turn of a straw whether your cause would triumph; theirs was poorly advocated by their *improvised* friends. We naturally esteem and love the devotedness which is rendered to ourselves; whilst we think lightly of that which is exercised in favor of a competitor. The Bourbons know, too, that you will never crouch to them; that your apostacy will not add to the humiliation of Napoleon. In a word, Caulincourt, you are *a man too much* in the kingdom of France. Come, then, to the court of Russia, where there is room for you and yours, and in

me you shall find a friend who will never renounce you.'

"I threw myself at the feet of the generous monarch," pursued the Duke de Vicenza. "I formed in my own mind plans of future happiness, which, alas! are buried in Alexander's grave!

"I have now given you a true statement of all that relates to my mission to Germany."

I had listened to this narrative with the deepest interest, and at its conclusion I said, extending my hand to the narrator, "Let me assure you, duke, that at all times, and in all places, my feeble voice will render a tribute of admiration to your noble conduct. Henceforth, when I hear you attacked, I will repeat your justification."

"Do you intend to stay much longer at Plombières?" inquired the duke.

"You," replied I, "possess the power of detaining me here as long as you please. 'Until you are tired of narrating, I cannot be tired of listening. Then, and not till then, I will order post-horses."

"There are," said the duke, "some curious facts connected with the campaign of 1813, with which, possibly, you may not be acquainted. The scenes at Fontainebleau would also interest you. I will relate to you how, when driven back by the advanced posts of the allies encamped before Paris, I entered the capital, concealed in the carriage of the Grand Duke Constantine; how I remained for four-and-twenty hours undiscovered in the apartments of that most generous of men, the Emperor Alexander. I will describe to you the difficulties and dangers which beset me in the *Hundred Days*, during which interval I may almost say I lived a hundred years, and when you look at my wrinkled brow, sunken eyes, and

attenuated form, you will say, they bear convincing testimony of the truth of my statements. At all events let it be well understood, that whenever I begin to weary you, you order post-horses."

CHAPTER VI.

Ernest Auzoni—The battle of Eylau—The imperial head-quarters—The orderly officer—General Lasalle—His intrepid conduct—The besieged church—Napoleon on the field of battle—Heroic action of Captain Auzoni—Rewards—Auzoni killed—Maria Louisa appointed Regent of the empire—Letter from Napoleon to Maria Louisa—Character of the Empress—Napoleon's opinion of women—A husband ruled by his wife.

I REMINDED the Duke de Vicenza of his promise to continue his narration of the events of the empire.

In the course of conversation I happened to mention the name of Captain Ernest Auzoni, who was killed at the battle of Eylau. He was a brave young officer, and his death blighted the happiness of a beautiful and accomplished woman whom I numbered among my friends. There was one remarkable circumstance connected with the last moments of poor Ernest Auzoni. The Emperor was an eye-witness of his death.

I questioned the Duke de Vicenza on this point.

"It is perfectly true," replied he. "Auzoni, who was a captain in the grenadiers of the guard, was a young officer of the highest promise. He was brave even among the bravest, and he several times distinguished himself during the battle of Eylau. His dauntless courage attracted the attention of the Emperor. Auzoni's company, animated by the example of its young and valiant

captain, had performed prodigies in the course of the battle.

"I could," pursued the duke, with a melancholy smile, "describe to you in a few words the glorious death of the gallant Auzoni; but in so doing my memory would carry me back to the field of Eylau, where the Emperor shone so transcendantly. When I cast a retrospective glance on the glorious scene, Napoleon is the engrossing subject of my reflections, and I cannot trace the most feeble sketch of the picture without assigning to him a place in the foreground."

"Duke," said I, "poor Ernest Auzoni is to me an object of secondary interest in comparison with Napoleon. Your details of the Emperor's private life have an inexpressible charm to me. History, always dry and barren, gives me facts and dates: but you conduct me, as it were, into Napoleon's presence; whilst listening to you, I can almost fancy that I see him and hear him."

"We passed the night of the 4th of February," resumed the duke, "at Schlitt, a little village situated a few leagues from Eylau. This was a few days preceding the battle. The Emperor installed himself in a miserable cottage, which contained no fire-place except that in the kitchen; there the Imperial head-quarters were established. I scarcely ever saw Napoleon more good-humored or in better spirits than on the night on which we bivouacked in that wretched hovel. I recollect that there was only one table, and on that was spread the Emperor's supper. He despatched the meal in five minutes, and then good-humoredly throwing his napkin at the head of Constant, his favorite valet, he

said:—'Quick, quick, take away the remains of my banquet' (it consisted of only one dish). Then advancing to his little camp bedstead, on which his maps had been deposited, he took up his map of Prussia, and spreading it out on the ground, knelt down to examine it. 'Come here, *Grand Ecuyer*,' said he, addressing me, 'and follow me from Schlitt—from this splendid capital, Schlitt, to Paris.' He marked with pins all the places through which we were to pass according to his plan. 'I shall beat them there,' said he, 'here—there again—and in three months the campaign will be ended—Russia must have a lesson. The fair Queen of Prussia shall learn too, at her expense, that advisers sometimes pay dearly for the advice they give. I do not like those women who throw aside their attributes of grace and goodness. A woman to instigate war!—to urge men to cut each others throats! Fie on it! She may run the risk of losing her kingdom by playing that game!'

"At this moment some despatches were delivered to the Emperor. He rapidly glanced them over, and exclaimed:—'Brave! bravo!—we have them now! But surely these despatches have been a long time on their way! How is this?' continued he, knitting his brow. 'Tell the orderly officer who brought them that I wish to speak with him.'

"'Monsieur,' said he, in a severe tone, addressing the officer, 'at what hour were these despatches placed in your hands?'

"'At eight o'clock in the evening, Sire.'

"'And how many leagues had you to ride?'

"'I do not know, precisely, Sire.'

"'But you ought to know. Monsieur,' pur-

sued he, drily, fixing his eyes upon the officer, who trembled beneath his glance of displeasure, 'an orderly officer ought to know that, Monsieur —*I* know it: you had nine leagues to ride, and you set off at eight o'clock—look at your watch, sir. What is it o'clock now?'

"The officer was quite disconcerted, and he stood motionless.

"'Tell me what is it o'clock, sir, if you please.'

"'Haft-past twelve, Sire. The roads were in a terrible state. In some places the snow obstructed my passage——'

"'Poor excuses, sir. Retire and await my orders,' and as the officer closed the door, he added—'this cool leisurely gentleman wants stimulating; the reprimand I have given him will make him spur his horse another time.—Let me see—my answer must be delivered in two hours hence; I have no time to lose.'

"The despatches which the Emperor had just received were from General Lasalle, who was encamped in the village of Deppen. He informed the Emperor that a column of the enemy, amounting, it was presumed, to between fifteen and sixteen thousand men, having been unable to work a passage through the snow, had got separated from the main body of the Prussian army. This intelligence was of the utmost importance. The Emperor's answer was, an order to General Lasalle to attack with his division the column commanded by General Lestocq, and thereby to prevent the junction which the latter was endeavoring to effect with the Russian army. At the same time, he directed two regiments of dragoons, who had been posted as scouts, at half a league from Deppen, to join

Lasalle's division, and to fall simultaneously on the column, which was attacked in front by the troops of General Lasalle.

"He sent for the orderly officer whom he had rebuked a few minutes previously. 'Set off immediately, sir,' said he; these despatches must be delivered with the utmost speed. General Lasalle must receive my orders by three o'clock —by three o'clock. You understand, sir?'

"'Sire,' replied the young officer in a most resolute tone, "by half-past two the general shall have the orders of which I have the honor to be the bearer.'

"'Very well, sir; mount your horse—and, stay—' added he, calling the officer back, 'tell General Lasalle that it will be agreeable to me that you should be the person selected to announce to me the success of these movements.'

"This orderly officer was the son of a senator. The Emperor was perfectly aware of this fact; but he was always more strict and severe towards young men who left the military colleges with the rank of officers, than towards those who gained their epaulettes by facing fire and sword. It is but just to acknowledge that the latter rarely needed a reprimand, and when they did, the Emperor admonished them with paternal gentleness. Thus he created in all ranks of the army men who would have sacrificed their lives rather than incur his displeasure. It is remarkable, too, that men who performed prodigies of valor, and covered themselves with glory, never looked for any reward. It seemed that the lives of all belonged to one alone, and that to perish in the cause of that one was merely the performance of a sacred duty. The heroic phasis of the empire

impressed a noble stamp on the French character.

"At the time to which I was just now referring," continued the duke, "wherever we fought the victory was our own. The intrepid Lasalle, with less than three thousand men, repulsed the enemy's column. General Lestocq, closely and vigorously pursued, owed his safety only to the swiftness of his horse. Three thousand Prussians perished in the conflict; two thousand five hundred prisoners and sixteen pieces of artillery were the trophies of this partial engagement. Its consequences were of vast importance, for the Russian army was cut off from some of its communications, and awaited in vain the promised reinforcement.

"On learning this news, the Emperor was quite transported with joy, and he several times exclaimed, 'Brave General Lasalle!—Admirable troops!—I am now sure of gaining the battle which I am going to fight at Eylau!—This is a good augury!—We will now march forward to Eylau, gentlemen!'

"On the day of the battle the weather was dreadful. The snow, which fell thickly in fine flakes, froze as it reached the surface of the earth. Our clothes, being covered with this sort of hoar frost, were stiff and heavy. The horses could not keep their footing. The sanguinary conflict had been maintained since morning, and when night set in, all was yet undecided. The Emperor, in a state of the utmost anxiety and impatience, galloped up and down the field of battle, braving the grape-shot which was showering in every direction. He was always to be seen on those points threatened with the greatest danger, well knowing that his presence would alone work

miracles. Meanwhile, the ceasing of the fire on some points indicated that the enemy was falling back. At eight o'clock, Napoleon was informed that the important position of the church, which had been obstinately disputed, taken and retaken several times in the course of the day, had again been carried by the enemy. Our troops, whose numbers were infinitely inferior to those of the Russians, retired fighting to the church-yard. At the moment when the orderly arrived with this intelligence, the Emperor had dismounted, and was personally directing a formidable battery pointed on the left wing of the Russian army. He instantly leaped on his horse, galloped off with the rapidity of lightning, and throwing himself into the midst of the battalions, which were beginning to give way, 'What!' he exclaimed, 'a handful of Russians repulse troops of the Grand Army! Hear me, my brave fellows. Let not a Russian escape from the church! Forward with the artillery! We must have the church, my lads! —we must have it!' This address was answered by 'Vive l'Empereur!'—'Forward! we must have the church!' and all rushed onward, rallying in good order. At a few paces from us we espied an old grenadier. His face was blackened by gunpowder, and the blood was streaming down his clothes. His left arm had been carried away by a bomb-shell. The man was hurrying to fall into the ranks. 'Stay, stay, my good fellow,' said the Emperor, 'go and get your wound dressed—go to the *ambulance*.'—'I will,' replied the grenadier, 'when we have taken the church,' and we immediately lost sight of him. I perceived the tears glistening in the Emperor's eyes, and he turned aside to conceal them.

"At ten o'clock that night the church was

ours. The Emperor, who was thoroughly exhausted, tottered with fatigue as he sat on his horse. He ordered the firing to cease; and the army reposed, surrounded by the enemy's bivouacks. Our head quarters were established on the Plateau, behind Eylau, in the midst of the infantry of the guard.

"'All is going on admirably,' said the Emperor to me as he entered his tent. 'Those men have fought bravely!' Without undressing, he threw himself on his bed, and in a few instants was sound asleep.

At four in the morning the Emperor was again on his horse. He surveyed the ground, arranged his plans, posted the artillery, harangued the troops, and rode past the front rank of each regiment. At day-break he gave orders that the attack should commence simultaneously on all points. About eleven o'clock, the snow, which had fallen incessantly during the whole morning, increased with such violence that we could scarcely perceive any object at the distance of ten paces. After the lapse of some little time, a Russian column, amounting to between five and six thousand men, was discerned; during the night this column had received orders to join the main body of the army, and had missed the way. The troops, who were marching forward hesitatingly and without scouts, had strayed to within the distance of a musket shot of our camp. The Emperor, standing erect, with his feet in the stirrups, and his glass at his eye, was the first to perceive that the black shadows slowly-defiling through the veil of snow must belong to the Russian reserve. He instantly directed towards them two battalions of the grenadiers of the guard, commanded by General Dorsenne. Whilst the

grenadiers advanced in silence, the squadron on duty near the Emperor turned the column, attacked it in the rear, and drove it forward on our grenadiers, who received it with fixed bayonets. This first shock was terrible to the Russians. But soon comparing their numerical strength with the small number of troops opposed to them, the officers drew their swords, rallied their men, and all defended themselves with great courage. At one moment our grenadiers appeared to flag, when a young officer darted forward from the ranks, exclaiming in a loud voice, 'Courage, my brave comrades! follow me, and the Russian colors are ours!' He rushed forward, sword in hand, followed by his company, and penetrated the compact centre of the Russian column. This unexpected assault broke their ranks; and our grenadiers resolutely entered the passage opened to them by the brave Auzoni. The Russians were all sabred or made prisoners. 'This is one of the most glorious achievements of this memorable day,' said the Emperor, who had been an eye-witness to the heroic conduct of Auzoni. He summoned him to his presence, and thus addressed him—

"'Captain Auzoni, you well deserve the honor of commanding my veteran *moustaches*. You have most nobly distinguished yourself. You have won an officer's cross and an endowment of 2,000 francs. You were made a captain at the opening of the campaign, and I hope you will return to Paris with a still higher rank. A man who earns his honors on the field of battle stands very high in my estimation. I present ten crosses to your company,' he added, turning towards the soldiers.

"Enthusiastic shouts rent the air, and these same men advanced to meet the enemy's fire

with a degree of courage and enthusiasm which it is impossible to describe.

"Two hours after the victory was ours. The enemy's forces, routed and dispersed, retreated in the utmost disorder, abandoning their wounded, their baggage, and their parks of artillery.

"But the day's work was not yet ended for the Emperor. According to custom, he went over the field of battle to estimate the enemy's loss, and to hurry the removal of the wounded. It was truly horrible to survey the immense extent of ground over which the snow of the preceding day was crimsoned with blood.

"A quarter-master of dragoons, grievously wounded, perceived the Emperor passing at a few paces from him. 'Turn your eyes this way, please your Majesty,' said the man. 'I believe I have got my death-wound, and shall soon be in the other world. But no matter for that! Vive l'Empereur!'

"'Let this poor fellow be immediately conveyed to the *ambulance*,' said Napoleon. 'Raise him up and commend him to the care of Larrey.' Large tears rolled down the cheeks of the dragoon when he heard the Emperor utter these words. 'I only wish,' said he, 'that I had a thousand lives to lay down for your Majesty.'

"Near a battery which had been abandoned by the enemy we beheld a singular picture, and one of which description can convey but a faint idea. About a hundred and fifty, or two hundred, French grenadiers were surrounded by a quadruple rank of Prussians. Both parties were weltering in a river of blood, amidst fragments of cannon, muskets, swords, &c. They had evidently fought with the most determined fury, for every corse exhibited numerous and horrible

wounds. A feeble cry of *Vive l'Empereur!* was heard to emanate from this mountain of the dead, and all eyes were instantly turned to the spot whence the voice proceeded. Half concealed beneath a tattered flag lay a young officer, whose breast was decorated with an order.—Though pierced with numerous wounds, he succeeded in raising himself up so as to rest on his elbow. His handsome countenance was overspread with the livid hue of death. He recognized the Emperor, and in a feeble, faltering voice, exclaimed, 'God bless your Majesty!—and now—farewell! farewell!—Oh! my poor mother!' He turned a supplicating glance to the Emperor, and then uttering the words, 'To dear France—my last sigh!' he fell stiff and cold.

"Napoleon seemed rivetted to the spot, which was watered with the blood of these heroes. 'Brave men,' said he: 'brave Auzoni! Excellent young man. Alas! this is a frightful scene. The endowment shall go to his mother. Let the order be presented for my signature as soon as possible.' Then turning to Doctor Ivan, who accompanied him, he said, 'Examine poor Auzoni's wounds and see whether anything can be done for him. This is indeed terrible!'

"The Emperor, whose feelings were deeply excited, continued his mournful inspection of the field of battle. On various similar occasions, I have seen him powerfully moved. Yet he never expressed by words his regret for the inevitable miseries which follow in the train of war. This was a very characteristic trait in Napoleon. I am certain that his heart was painfully wrung when he beheld his devoted friends and servants stretched lifeless at his feet. But he seldom betrayed any outward manifestation of grief, either

because it was not natural to him, or because he was so perfectly master of himself that he could repress the signs of inward emotion.

"Now that I am free from the fascination which his presence exercised over me, I sometimes endeavor coolly to analyse that character, that peculiar organisation, which seemed to be made up of so many incongruous shades. Napoleon defies psychological science. His character, doubtless, presented imperfections, but the beautiful and the sublime are predominant, and the more I study the character of Napoleon the more I am impressed with its grandeur.

"I have now told you," said the Duke de Vicenza, "all that I know relative to Captain Auzoni. Whenever my memory reverts to the battle of Eylau, the aspect of the field on the day after the victory appears, as it were, visibly present to me."

"Were you near the Emperor," inquired I, "when the Dukes of Istria and Frioul were killed?"

"I was," replied he; "they fell in the campaign of 1813. From that period we sustained a continuity of reverses which have no precedent in the annals of any other nation. It would seem that, after having passed through every grade of human prosperity, Napoleon was destined to suffer every degree of moral misery. From that fatal year, commenced my hourly, I may say my momentary, duty of alleviating that bitter anguish—of sharing that silent grief, which the sufferer cannot and will not express, and which he fears to betray either by word or look.

"We left Saint Cloud for Mentz on the 15th of April, 1813, at four in the morning. When the carriage started, the Emperor, who had his

eyes fixed on the castle, threw himself back, placed his hand on his forehead, and remained for some time in that meditative attitude. At length, rousing himself from his gloomy reverie, he began to trace in glowing colors his plans and projects, the hopes he cherished of the faithful co-operation of Austria, &c. &c. Then he resumed his natural simplicity of manner, and spoke to me with emotion of the regret he felt at leaving his *bonne Louise* and his lovely child.

"'I envy,' said he, 'the lot of the meanest peasant in my empire. At my age, he has discharged his debt to his country, and he may remain at home enjoying the society of his wife and children; whilst I—I must fly to the camp, and engage in the strife of war—such is the mandate of my inexplicable destiny.' He again sunk into his reverie. To divert him from it, I turned the conversation on the scene of the preceding evening, when at the Elysée the Empress, in the presence of the princes, grand dignitaries and ministers, had taken the solemn oath in the character of Regent. The Arch-Chancellor (Cambacères) and the Duke de Cadora were appointed her counsellors. Those were two men of vast ability.

"'*Ma bonne Louise*,' said the Emperor to me, 'is gentle and submissive. I can depend on her. *Her love and fidelity will never fail me.* In the current of events, there may arise circumstances which decide the fate of an empire. In that case I hope the daughter of the Cæsars will be fired by the spirit of her grandmother, Maria Theresa.'

"The Emperor," continued the duke, "was mistaken in his idea of the character of the Empress. She was endowed with none of that energy which gives birth to great resolutions.

She was, it is true, gentle and submissive, and in the every-day routine of private life she might have conferred relative happiness on her husband; but that is all. Beneath that envelope of ice, it would have been vain to seek a heart; and, like all weak-minded people, she was a dissembler, not from calculation, but from apathy and fear. She was cold and methodical, and utterly incapable of feeling that enthusiasm, that ardor of feeling, which, under certain circumstances, inspire heroic actions and prompt to noble sacrifices.

"Had Maria Louisa been tranquilly seated on the throne of France in ordinary times, she would have passed unobserved—had she owed her importance solely to the reflection of Napoleon's glory, she would have commanded respect, though never admiration. But her contemporaries have been called upon to judge her in her character of Empress. History, forced to inscribe her name side by side with that of her immortal consort, must acknowledge that the Austrian Arch-Duchess proved herself incapable of discharging the duties of wife, mother, or sovereign. Maria Louisa was in fact worse than incapable, for she was below the level of her position.

"The Emperor, though an accurate judge of men, knew nothing of women. He had mixed but little in female society. His feelings in reference to women were wholly material, and he did not admit the fascinating power of intelligence and talent in the female sex. He did not like learned or celebrated women, or those who in any way stepped out of the quiet sphere of domestic life. He assigned to women a very low grade in the social order, and thought they

ought not to exercise power or influence over the minds of men. A woman was in his eyes merely a graceful being, and nothing more. Endeavors have been made to throw a romantic coloring over his short-lived amours; but the fact is, that Napoleon never formed any of those attachments in which the strongest party is the weakest, and in which the enslaved heart gives more than is demanded of it. 'Love,' said he to me one day, 'is merely a silly infatuation, depend on it.'

"The Emperor and I used to have very animated discussions when the fair sex became the subject of his caustic remarks. I was very far from sharing the notions of my honored master on this subject. I used to assert my opinions with my accustomed frankness, and it is but just to say that he bore with great patience the contradiction of his most firmly-rooted ideas.

"One day, when I was transacting business with him, I proposed the advancement of a person who had filled a situation in the civil administration of the imperial stables. He was a man of integrity and business-like habits, recommendations indispensable to persons employed in public departments under the empire. I was rigid in exacting strict attention to duty; and I always used my influence to forward the interests of those who were most deserving. I spoke to the Emperor of M——, and set forth his good qualities.

"'No, Caulincourt,' he replied, 'M—— is very well where he is. Leave him there.'

"But, Sire, returned I, he is a man of excellent abilities, and most assiduous in his attention to business. The appointment which I request for him is only an act of justice.

"'My dear Caulincourt, I assure you that your *protegé* is a fool.'

"I manifested some surprise on hearing this.

"'Yes, I tell you he is a fool. A husband who suffers himself to be led by his wife always ranks very low in my estimation.'

"But, inquired I, with a smile which I could not repress, how happens it that your Majesty has been made acquainted with circumstances which certainly have no connection with the service of the imperial stables?

"'Ah! ah! *grand ecuyer*, you see I know what is going on better than you do,' said the Emperor, rubbing his hands and laughing. Cagliostro was a poor conjuror in comparison with me.'

"I nevertheless persevered in my suit in behalf of poor M——, and I obtained for him the place to which his merit well entitled him.

"'Well, well,' said the Emperor, 'let him have it, but tell him I like a man to be master in his own house.'

"You see," added the Duke de Vicenza, "that my capricious imagination has carried me very far from the road to Mentz, along which the Emperor and I were journeying on the 15th of April, 1813. We reached Mentz late on the following night. I will tell you to-morrow the news we learned on our arrival."

CHAPTER VII.

Napoleon's opinion of the Grand Duchess of Weimar—Death of Marshal Bessières—The Emperor's grief—Entrance into Dresden—Character of the King of Saxony—The victories of Lutzen and Bautzen—Conversation between the Duke de Vicenza and Duroc—Extraordinary fatigue endured by Napoleon—The military surgeon, Larrey—An experiment—Awkward firing of the young recruits—Duroc mortally wounded—His death—Napoleon writes his epitaph—Position of Napoleon in 1813—The continental sovereigns and the English cabinet—Ingratitude of some of the French generals—The Duke de Vicenza's mission to Prague—Conferences with Prince Metternich—Count Louis de Narbonne.

"On our arrival at Mentz," resumed the Duke de Vicenza, "we learned that Erfurth and the whole of Westphalia had been thrown into the utmost alarm by false reports which had been artfully propagated. This was a scheme which had just then been set on foot for the purpose of exciting disaffection. The Emperor insisted on proceeding onward without even stopping to rest. The speed at which we journeyed was inconceivable. We were only eight hours in proceeding from Mentz to Erfurth. There, as every where, the presence of the Emperor operated like a talisman in tranquillising the public mind. During the whole of our journey through this conquered country, Napoleon was the object of fervent prayers and benedictions.

"On our way through Weimar, the Emperor saw the grand duchess, and he made a remark upon her, which was very singular as coming

from Napoleon. The remark was, to be sure, made in reference to a crowned head. 'This Grand Duchess of Weimar,' said the Emperor, 'is an extraordinary woman. She has the talent of a clever man.'

"We reached Eckartsberg, and found the place occupied by troops, parks of artillery, &c. The Emperor had only two apartments assigned to him, and both looked to the market-place of the town, which was the scene of incessant noise and confusion. The uproar was perfectly intolerable; yet the Emperor, seated at his table, with his maps spread before him, and his compasses in his hand, seemed as undisturbed as though he had been in his quiet cabinet at the Tuilleries. He was wholly absorbed in the plans he was meditating, and quite unconscious of all that was passing around him. I never knew any one gifted with the power of mental abstraction in so great a degree as Napoleon, or who could so easily endure cold, heat, hunger, and the privations of bodily comfort. It seemed as though he had the power of controlling his physical wants. He was a singularly organised being.

"On the 1st of May we reached Lutzen, and the battle was fought on the day following. It was a brief but glorious conflict. By five in the afternoon the enemy was completely routed. The firing had ceased; and only a few stray balls, aimed at random, were flying to and fro. Marshal Bessières, wrapped in his cloak, and mounted on a height, was watching, with his telescope at his eye, the retreat of the Russians. A brigadier attached to his escort was killed by the bursting of a bombshell. 'Bury that brave man,' said he, and in a moment after he had uttered those words, he was himself killed by a ball fired from a very

considerable distance. The Emperor was much attachced to Bessières, who had followed him in all his campaigns and had taken part in all his battles. Bessières had passed through almost every grade in the command of the imperial guard. His courage had stood the test of every trial. He was universally esteemed and beloved, and sincerely regretted.

"The Emperor was deeply affected by his death. 'This is a great loss,' said he, 'a very great loss—Bessières deserved to die the death of Turenne. Gentlemen, this is an enviable end!' A few weeks subsequently the Emperor's feelings sustained a more poignant wound. Grief has its different gradations of pain for the human heart, as the rack has its degrees of bodily torture!

"On the 10th of May we entered Dresden, where the good, the noble-hearted King of Saxony joined the Emperor on the following day. The character of that sovereign presented the very *beau ideal* of exalted virtue, and seemed to be uncorrupted by the vice of human nature. Party spirit has sought to chill the admiration naturally inspired by his noble conduct towards Napoleon, by describing the King as a person not above the level of ordinary mediocrity. But these misrepresentations will find no credence among persons of discernment. The King of Saxony was a man of talent, extensive information, and of chivalrous honor. He was not one of those who can make integrity give way to interest; or who regard a promise as a thing to be fulfilled conditionally, according to circumstances. It was the King of Saxony whom I first heard utter a phrase, which has since often been quoted, and which will portray the moral

feeling of the man, viz: 'Probity and truth are the best *finesses* in politics.' The Emperor Napoleon, who revered the King of Saxony as a father, often repeated the above words, without perhaps placing faith in them, but as a tribute of admiration to a beautiful and noble idea.

"In our conferences with the King of Saxony, we spoke without reserve of our hopes and fears, and of the probable result of the negotiations which had been opened, and which I was entrusted to conduct with M. Budna, and with the Emperor Alexander. With respect to Austria, I cherished but faint expectations; and on the part of Russia and Prussia, I saw nothing to hope for. You may easily believe that it cost me a painful effort to conceal beneath an outward show of confidence, my profound conviction of the inutility of Napoleon's efforts to avert the storm—I saw that it must inevitably and surely break over our heads, even at the very moment when, to the Emperor's dictation, I wrote those pages which must ever remain a monument of the sincerity of Napoleon's desire to make peace on reasonable conditions. But all our sacrifices, all our efforts, were unavailing when opposed by the machinations of England—England, our implacable and eternal enemy. Five powers were leagued against one! A contingent of two millions of men nullified at once their defeats and our victories! In vain did the sons of France perform prodigies of valor on the field of battle, which they watered with their blood. They but enfeebled the resources of their country, which sooner or later was doomed to succumb in the unequal conflict.

"When we had gained the victory of Lutzen, I offered, in the Emperor's name, peace to Rus-

sia and Prussia; but the offer was refused. A few days after this we were again victorious at Bautzen, but we sealed our triumph with the bravest blood in the French army. Bruyères, Kirgener, and Duroc, were among the lamented trophies of the enemy's defeat.

"Presentiments are a sort of instinctive communication—a reflection of the future. On the evening of the 1st of May, just four days before the battle of Bautzen, the Emperor had a long conference with M. Budna, who had been sent as envoy from the Emperor Francis to his son-in-law. Whilst M. Budna was closeted with the Emperor, Duroc and I walked up and down, conversing together in the apartment leading to the Imperial cabinet, to which M. Budna had been introduced at 10 o'clock. The extraordinary length of the interview surprised us: it was quite at variance with Napoleon's custom. The great clock of Dresden struck twelve; and profound silence prevailed throughout the city, in which, during the day, the presence of the troops had kept up incessant noise and movement. Our candles were nearly burnt out, and a dim and unsteady light was diffused over the dark hangings of the apartment. Every object around us presented an aspect of gloom. We were discoursing on the events of the campaign, when Duroc suddenly seized my arm, and pressing it convulsively, uttered emphatically these words, which seemed like a mysterious revelation:—'My friend, this has been going on too long!—We shall all be swept off one after another—and he—he too will fall a sacrifice. An inward voice whispers to me that I shall never again see France!"

"These were the prophetic words of a man whose death was near at hand.

"The Emperor informed me that his conference with M. Budna had produced no result. 'Caulincourt,' said he, 'among these men, *born Kings*, the ties of nature are matter of indifference. The interests of his daughter and grandson will not induce Francis to deviate one hair's breadth from the course which the Austrian cabinet may mark out. Oh! it is not blood that flows in the veins of those people, but cold policy. The Emperor of Austria, by rallying cordially with me, might save all. United to France, Austria would be formidable—Prussia and Russia could no longer maintain the conflict. But Austria is ruled by an ambitious traitor. I must yet humor him a little ere I can destroy him. Metternich, Caulincourt, will do a great deal of mischief!'

"I could never understand how the Emperor bore up under the physical privations and bodily fatigues of that campaign. The days were occupied by battles and rapid movements from place to place. Alternately in the directions of the Elbe and Pyrna, the Russians and Prussians presented themselves. Both men and horses were exhausted by marches and countermarches. The hospitals were crowded by sick and wounded. The Emperor, who during the day was incessantly on his horse, usually passed his nights in writing.

"The memorable battle of Bautzen lasted thirty-four hours, and during the whole of that time the Emperor took no rest. On the second day, overcome with lassitude and fatigue, he alighted from his horse, and lay down on the slope of a ravine, surrounded by the batteries of

Marshal Marmont's corps, and amidst the roaring of a terrific cannonade. There he fell asleep. I awoke him an hour after, by announcing that the battle was won. 'Ah!' he exclaimed; 'it may truly be said that good comes to us in sleep.' He immediately mounted his horse, for, though the engagement was actually decided, the fighting was partially kept up until five in the evening.

"That victory was marked by marvellous feats of courage. This army, formed of the wreck of the unfortunate Russian expedition, of raw recruits, and young troops unused to service—this army performed prodigies of valor. During the action, I several times heard the Emperor exclaim —'Bravo! these are mere boys—soldiers of yesterday's creation. Oh, there is nothing like French courage!'

"The Emperor's tent was pitched on the field of battle, near a solitary inn, which had been the head-quarters of the Emperor Alexander during the two preceding days.

"I will now," pursued the Duke de Vicenza, "relate to you a circumstance which is very honorable to a man whom I know you highly respect—I allude to our excellent Larrey. An immense *ambulance* had been established at a little distance from head-quarters. In the evening the Emperor visited it, with the view of stimulating, by his presence, the zeal of the surgeons, whose number was very small in proportion to the multitude of wounded. The Emperor remarked that many of the young conscripts had lost two fingers of the right hand; and it struck him that they had mutilated themselves purposely for the sake of evading military service. Larrey decidedly pronounced the suspicion to be unfounded. The Emperor, nevertheless,

retained his opinion, and, in a tone of great displeasure, declared that every man who might be guilty of such disgraceful cowardice should be shot.

"It was a serious affair; and there could be no doubt of the necessity of checking so dangerous an example by severe punishment. Larrey, with his characteristic humanity and generous feeling, took up the defence of his patients; but, unluckily, his defence did not appear to be grounded on convincing proof. The Emperor, with his accustomed pertinacity, determined to inquire into the matter, and the result was the confirmation of his belief that the wounds, which were all uniform, were not the result of accident. Larrey suffered the word *injustice* to escape him. The Emperor turned pale with anger; but he suppressed all expression of his displeasure. Larrey, as if inspired by a sudden thought, cast his eyes towards some poor creatures who were creeping about the *ambulance*. 'Come hither, conscripts!' said he, in his gruffest tone of voice. Even now I can scarcely refrain from laughing, when I think of Larrey turning up his sleeves to his elbows, and armed with his bistoury, running eagerly towards the soldiers, who shrunk back in alarm, exclaiming—'We are not wounded, Doctor!' Larrey pursued them, and seizing one of them by the arm, dragged him forward, saying: 'Come this way, blockheads. Now load your muskets and range yourselves in three ranks, the foremost kneeling, and fire. Obey me without delay, or I will cut off your ears. Now, Sire, observe, if you please.' The soldiers fired, and the man who was in the foremost rank cried out he had received a wound in the right hand. 'Well done!" exclaimed Larrey, trium-

phantly, and then, hurrying to the assistance of the wounded man, he said—'Never mind, my lad, never mind. Come with me, I'll dress your wound; it will be healed in a few days. It is nothing at all!'

"The proof was convincing. The uniform wounds observable in the right hands of the soldiers, had all been caused by the hurry and unskilfulness with which the young conscripts discharged their muskets. They held them in too inclined a position, and consequently the balls, frequently struck the hands of the soldiers who were kneeling in the foremost rank.

"'Larrey,' said the Emperor, 'you are a clever and an excellent fellow! I am very glad that you have proved me to be in the wrong; but at the same time——'

"'At the same time, Sire,' interrupted Larrey, without ceremony, let every man mind his own business.'

"The Emperor could not refrain from laughing.

"On the day following that on which the above curious scene took place, the Emperor was cut to the heart by the irreparable loss of his dear friend, Duroc. Marshal Duroc was one of those men who seem to be too pure and perfect for this world, and whose excellence helps to reconcile us to human nature. In the high station to which the Emperor had wisely raised him, the Grand Marshal retained all the qualities of the private citizen. The splendor of his position had not power to dazzle or corrupt him. Duroc remained simple, natural, and independent; a warm and generous friend, a just and honorable man. I pronounce on him this eulogy without fear of contradiction. His death

spread grief and consternation through the army and in Paris. The Emperor was perfectly overpowered by his affliction. Poor Duroc! my last conversation with him is still vividly fresh in my memory.

"Only those who took part in the disastrous campaign of 1813 can form an accurate idea of our inextricable position. Every day brought a fresh battle, and every battle a fresh victory, but unattended by any advantage. The Emperor closely pursued the Russian rear guard, which unceasingly evaded him. Then the Prussians would show themselves—we would drive them back; and the same thing was repeated over and over again. Dresden was our headquarters, our magazine-general, our hospital-general, and we sojourned night and day in the highways.

"On the day on which the Grand Marshal was killed, he had scarcely left the Emperor for a single moment. For the tenth time, perhaps, since the morning, the Russians had eluded our pursuit after we had killed a considerable number of them. This engagement, though it did not deserve the name of a battle, caused great havoc on both sides. Several balls had struck the ground at the Emperor's feet. He turned sharply to Duroc and me, who were standing beside him. 'How,' said he, 'after all this carnage is there no advantage gained? Surely these Russians rise up and come to life again. Will there never be an end to this?' At that moment a bomb-shell, which burst near the spot where we were standing, overthrew three horsemen, struck an officer of the escort, and threw him under the legs of the Emperor's horse. The

animal started, and the Emperor angrily pulled the bridle.

"'Sire,' said an aide-de-camp, who at that moment galloped up to us, 'General Bruyère is killed.'

"'Ah!' exclaimed the Emperor, and then he added in a suppressed tone, 'this day will be fatal to us.' He immediately spurred his horse, and set off at a rapid gallop to a height which commanded Makersdorf, where the fighting was still going on. Marshal Mortier, Duroc, Kirgener, and I, followed him closely, but the wind blew the smoke and dust in our faces with such violence that we could not see each other. A tree near which the Emperor passed was struck and knocked down by a ball. I arrived on the plateau at the same moment with the Emperor. 'My lunette! bring me my lunette!' he called. I turned round, and found to my surprise that we were alone. Charles de Plaisance was galloping towards us. He looked pale and bewildered, and approaching me, he said, 'General Kirgener is killed; . . . the Duke Frioul is ——'

"'What!' exclaimed the Emperor; 'what has happened, sir?'

"'Sire, General Kirgener and—the Grand Marshal are killed.'

"'Duroc killed! Go—go—it is a mistake—it is impossible—quite impossible. Caulincourt, you know he was this moment at my side.'

"Several aide-de-camps now joined us, and confirmed the fatal intelligence. Duroc was mortally wounded. The ball which had broken down the tree had in its rebound struck General Kirgener, and then the Duke de Frioul, whose

bowels were literally ripped open. The Emperor listened to these details with an air of torpid sorrow; and then in faltering accents he exclaimed, 'Duroc! Duroc!—Gracious Heaven!—My presentiments never deceive me. This is indeed a sad day—a fatal day!' He slowly paced from the plateau, and returned to the camp. On entering his tent, he walked about for some time in silent thoughtfulness. At intervals he stopped short, and addressed to me these broken sentences: 'Alas! when will fate relent? When will there be an end of this?—Caulincourt, my eagles will yet triumph, but the happiness which accompanied them has fled.'

"I was myself too deeply oppressed by grief to attempt to offer him consolation. I loved Duroc as though he had been my brother. His unexpected death brought back with renewed force all the pangs I had suffered at the battle of the Moskowa, where Duroc feelingly deplored with me the loss of my unfortunate brother Auguste.

"The Prince de Neufchatel entered, and announced that the Russians were once more repulsed.

"'It is high time,' said the Emperor, bitterly. 'Two brave generals and Duroc lost in a miserable skirmish.'

"'Sire,' inquired Berthier, 'what orders has your Majesty to give?'

"'Wait till to-morrow.—Whither has he been conveyed?—How is he, Berthier?'

"'Sire, he is in a house at Makersdorf. Ivan and Larrey are in attendance on him. There is no hope.'

"'I must see him,' said Napoleon, 'Poor, poor Duroc!'

"In the evening, Berthier and I accompanied the Emperor on this sad visit. Duroc, who was stretched on a camp-bed, was suffering the most excruciating agony. His features were so frightfully distorted, that he was scarcely recognisable. When we entered, he turned towards us, and fixed his eyes steadfastly on the Emperor. It was the horrible, fixed gaze of death. There was in it an indefinable expression of reproach and affection. The Emperor was overcome, and withdrew from the bedside. I took Duroc's hand in mine, but I was unable to speak; emotion choked my utterance. He articulated with difficulty; but he faintly said, 'I foresaw this at Dresden. The inward voice did not deceive me. Alas! the worst is not yet over!' His strength failed him, and he seemed to faint. The Emperor again advanced to the bed, and embraced him several times. The doctors entered. 'Is there then no hope?' inquired the Emperor. 'None whatever,' was the answer. Poor Duroc for a moment recovered his consciousness, and turning his eyes towards the Emperor, he said, 'For pity's sake, give me opium.' The Emperor took his hand, pressed it to his bosom, embraced him once more, and then seizing my arm, hurried out of the room.

"'This is horrible,' he exclaimed. 'My excellent, my dear Duroc!—Oh, what a loss is this!'—I observed the tears dropping from his eyes as we returned in mournful silence to the camp.

"At five o'clock in the morning Ivan presented himself to the Emperor, who immediately understood the purport of his visit. 'Ah, Ivan!' he exclaimed; 'all is over. He is released from misery. Well, he is happier than I.'

"The Emperor gave directions for the purchase of a piece of ground at Makersdorf, for the erection of a monument over the grave of Duroc. Napoleon wrote with his own hand the following inscription:—

"'To the memory of General Duroc, Duke de Frioul, Grand Marechal du Palais to the Emperor Napoleon. He fell gloriously on the field of battle, being mortally wounded by a cannon-ball, and he expired in the arms of his friend, the Emperor.'

"Napoleon placed the slip of paper in the hands of Berthier, without uttering a word.

"I have now, added the Duke de Vicenza, "told you all that passed in the last touching interview between Napoleon and Duroc. All the stories that have been propagated respecting the reproaches addressed by Duroc to the Emperor are mere fabrications. Neither Duroc nor any one of us in his sad situation would have addressed reproaches to the Emperor, weeping over the death-bed of a friend. If feelings of despair and regret really arose in the noble heart of Duroc, his tongue never gave utterance to them. They were buried with him in the grave.

"But wherefore," said the Duke de Vicenza, "should I conduct you through the sanguinary phases of the campaign of 1813? The gigantic efforts and the marvellous victories of the armies of Napoleon during that unequal conflict are not subjects adapted to fugitive conversation. To describe that period of heroism and treason, of glory and disgrace, is the task of the historian. For my part," added he, in a melancholy tone, and laying his hand on his heart, "I feel that my yet remaining span of life must be too brief to enable me to relate all I know of the base in-

trigue and treachery which hurled France from the pinnacle of glory to the lowest point of humiliation. Yet what I could disclose would present a useful lesson to the future! Illness and deeply-seated grief had paralysed the energies of the man who of all others was best qualified to write the history of the empire."

"Oh, duke!" I exclaimed, "let me intreat you to continue your interesting narrations. Leave battles and victories if you will, but pray give us details of Napoleon. No one knows so much of him as you."

"That is true," replied the duke smiling. "During the campaign of 1813, I conducted all the negotiations which were maintained with the view of bringing about peace. All who may write on this subject, even with the best intentions, must inevitably fall into error. Historical documents will, it is true, supply them with official facts; but the secret springs, the base intrigues, which rendered the conclusion of peace impossible, will baffle the investigation of the shrewdest observer.

"For example, it would be a serious mistake to imagine that the Emperor Napoleon was not fully aware of the position in which he stood. I, who have suffered so much from his irresolution, do not believe that he was under the influence of any illusion at the Congress of Chatillon. His resistance was the last effort of a powerfully organised mind—the last convulsion of mighty despair. Though I myself conjured him to come to an understanding with the allied powers at any price, yet I am not convinced that our concessions would have produced the wished for object. Nevertheless, it would have been politic to make the concessions, and thereby to have

warranted a new appeal to the patriotism of the nation. The *levée en masse* might have been carried into effect, and France might have been saved a second time. Such was my opinion; but I could not bring the Emperor to take the same view of things.

"I will relate a few facts, which will afford you an idea of the real position of the Emperor in 1813.

"I had negotiated and concluded the armistice of Pleswitz with Prussia and Russia. Austria still affected to play the part of conciliatress: but her compact with France was broken, and we knew it. The armistice of Pleswitz was a misfortune, for the time had arrived when even the most rational measures proved disastrous to us. A suspension of arms was necessary to afford time for re-organising and newly equipping the army, and also to give the Emperor a little respite, during which he could consider in the retirement of his closet the important questions involved in our political position. One evening, or rather one night, the Emperor and I were discussing together some of the points then in dispute. We had been writing at a table, on which an immense number of papers and documents were lying; suddenly the Emperor thrust the papers on one side, and rising from his chair, said—'We are a set of fools, Caulincourt. We are like children at play. These people will never come to any understanding—we have all changed ground. They have forgotten my conduct to them at Tilsit.—I might then have crushed them, but I was magnanimous. Posterity will avenge me. These kings, by the grace of God and Napoleon, will appear petty indeed compared with me, who reign by the grace of my

sword. But after all, my clemency was weakness—a school-boy would have acted more wisely than I did. He would have profited by the lessons of history, and would have known that these degenerate kings respect neither faith nor law.'

"The hurried and agitated manner in which the Emperor uttered these broken sentences—the base deceptions which had provoked his recriminations—all imparted a terrific character to this burst of indignation. After a pause of some minutes, he thus resumed, in a more calm tone:—'How maladroitly these people conduct their own affairs. The pertinacity of their endeavors to force me to abandon the continental system sufficiently reveals their ulterior projects. I am of your opinion, Caulincourt. England is the soul of this deadly war against France. England gorges them with gold to sustain the conflict. She will soon convince them that even the treaty of Luneville is too favorable to France. The Machiavelism of the British cabinet will overreach the short-sighted politicians of the alliance. They do not perceive that I am the only barrier that can check the interminable encroachments of English domination. Their greatest enemy is, not Napoleon, but England. Even were I to consent to the restitution of the Illyrian provinces, I should make a fruitless sacrifice. It would only be an acknowledgment of our weakness, and the signal for further exactions on the part of our enemies. Their hypocritical moderation covers a despicable after-thought. They now demand the abolition of the continental system, and the surrender of the Illyrian provinces. To-morrow they will demand the division of Saxony, assigning the Elbe as my

limit. Thus they will at the same time punish the King of Saxony for his fidelity to me. I will never consent to this indignity, and still less will I consent to parcelling out the dominions of the King of Saxony, my most devoted and faithful ally.' 'Your Majesty,' observed I, 'regards the question in its worst point of view; this is pushing matters to the extremity. But admitting that your anticipations should be justified by the extravagant ultimatum of the Allied Powers, might it not be consistent with a bold line of policy to provoke the development. We are placed in critical circumstances; and candor is a duty which I owe to your Majesty. You are accused, Sire, of not wishing for peace, of wantonly sacrificing the blood of your subjects to your unbridled ambition. (Here he made a gesture of impatience) Sire,' continued I, 'these perfidious insinuations have a most mischievous tendency. They mislead the public mind, and excite disaffection in the army. There is but a step between discontent and that inertness which paralyses the wisest operations. Grant what may be reasonably granted, and should new exactions force you to prolong the war, your position will be better, inasmuch as public opinion will be enabled to judge of the bad faith of the Allied Powers and the necessity of our resistance.'

"'Public opinion,' exclaimed the Emperor, 'is ever ready to prostitute itself to its own interest. Do you not perceive, Caulincourt, what is passing around us? The men whom I have raised to eminence, are now bent solely on enjoying the benefits I have heaped upon them. They do not see that they must still fight to win the repose they are thirsting for. And I! do they imagine that I rest on a bed of roses? Do

not I take my share of the fatigues and perils of war? Do I not every day offer my life as a sacrifice to my country? How base is their ingratitude!'

"I entirely concurred in his opinion respecting the demoralisation of many of the commanders of the army," pursued the duke.—"After their many exertions and perils, they naturally desired repose. But was that the time to seek it! Did not the safety of France, and the well-understood interest of all, command them, on the contrary, to rally round their able and still formidable chief? Complaints and murmurs could only tend to aggravate the difficulties of our position. You cannot conceive how greatly this selfish feeling annoyed and distressed the Emperor, who was ever ready to sacrifice himself for the general welfare. I endeavored by every means in my power to divert him from this train of painful reflection, but all in vain; he incessantly recurred to the subject.

"'The fact is, Caulincourt,' said he, 'that because you are not ungrateful yourself, you cannot comprehend ingratitude. But open your eyes, and look around. You will see that none but my poor soldiers and officers, who have not yet obtained the rank of princes, dukes, and counts, are worth anything. It is melancholy to say this; but it is the truth. I will tell you,' continued he, with increased warmth of manner, 'I will tell you what I ought to do. I ought to send all these newly-created nobles to repose on their down beds, or to strut about in their chateaux. I ought to rid myself of these growlers, and recommence the war with an army formed of the young and uncorrupted; of men who would look neither before nor behind them, but

who would inscribe on their banners, as in 1793, the words—Conquer or Die! With that device in my heart, I overran Egypt, subjugated Italy, and raised the French eagles to a height to which none will raise them after me.'

"Here he threw himself on his chair. Large drops of perspiration stood on his forehead, and he was in a state of highly excited feeling. I gazed on him with admiration mingled with melancholy. I thought he never before appeared so great. Alas! it was fortune and not his genius that had forsaken him. What profound intuition that man possessed! What a ready power of judging men and things! He scanned at a glance the abyss which lay between his omnipotence and the first step of his adverse fortune. The men who once bowed so humbly to him, now no longer trembled beneath his angry glance. Napoleon felt that he had outlived himself; that his will, to which all had crouched in ready obedience, was now evaded or questioned. Opposition was feebly and meanly attempted; there was now no longer peril in the attempt!

"The Emperor informed me," pursued the duke, "that Louis de Narbonne, our ambassador at Vienna, had written from Prague, stating that the declaration of war by Austria against France would be immediately published. Thus our feeble hopes in that quarter were annihilated. Napoleon, who could not persuade himself that the case was without appeal, sent me on a private family mission to the Emperor Francis. 'Go, Caulincourt,' said he, 'you are a new man to the Austrian Cabinet; go and try what you can do with Metternich. If anything can be done, you will have some advantage, through your former

friendly relations with the Emperor of Russia. My dear Caulincourt,' added he, cordially pressing my hand, 'you, I know, will not forsake me. At least, I am assured of that. See the Emperor of Austria as often as possible; tell him that I still cannot believe he means to injure his daughter and grandson, setting aside every other consideration which the Emperor Napoleon might urge.' He uttered these words with the air of pride naturally inspired by past recollections.—He might, indeed, justly have appealed to the magnanimity of his conduct towards Austria.—'Tell the Emperor Francis,' said Napoleon, at my farewell interview, 'that I do not send an ambassador to the Austrian cabinet, but that I send to my father-in-law a friend who knows my heart, who is acquainted with my inmost thoughts.'

"I set out on my expedition in very depressed spirits. I plainly foresaw the utter uselessness of any efforts I could make. How different were my feelings when I departed on my brilliant mission to the court of Russia, whither a few years previously I had conveyed the commands of the most powerful monarch in the world.

"Whilst I was at Prague, I had the honor of seeing the Emperor Francis almost every day. He treated me with the utmost amiability. He was not so unintellectual a man as had been represented. In ordinary times the Emperor Francis would have been one of those sovereigns whose subjects would have invoked blessings on their memory. In the critical circumstances in which he was placed, surrounded as it were by a general conflagration, he had not sufficient courage to make himself responsible for the consequences which might result to his country by the maintenance of his family compact with Napoleon.

Francis was amiable, kind-hearted and benevolent; but there was not in his nature one spark of courage, energy, or heroism. The great Maria Theresa is to the House of Austria what Henry IV is to the House of France, a splendid tradition. The blood of these great monarchs does not flow in the veins of their descendants. There is a remarkable degeneration in royal families. I am aware that this opinion will be pronounced by certain persons to be a democratic *bontade;* but that will not disprove the fact.

"The Emperor of Austria clearly saw the embarrassments of his peculiar position; but he had not strength to rise above them. On the one hand there was evident danger in remaining faithful to France; and on the other there was disgrace and even crime in forsaking her. Francis vacillated between his sovereign duties and his paternal affections; and the result was that he did violence to his heart and his conscience. He relieved himself from the responsibility, and threw the burthen on the shoulders of Metternich. It was not, therefore, the Emperor whom I had to reason with and persuade. 'See Metternich—explain this to Metternich,' were the only answers I could obtain to my indefatigable solicitations.

"In my conferences with the Austrian Prime Minister I had to dispute inch by inch the most absurd pretensions—to refute the most ridiculous prejudices—to reply with politeness to a man who, under an outward guise of cold civility, but ill concealed his firm determination to degrade and annihilate France. How often did that excellent man Louis de Narbonne calm my resentment and check my indignation. What parts are we playing here? said I—'Alas!' replied he, 'we

are playing the part of the conquered, and we must pay the penalty!'

"Louis de Narbonne was a singular combination of talent and levity. The Emperor used to say—'Narbonne is the type of the brilliant butterflies of the reign of Louis XV.' This was perfectly true. His *recherché* style of dress, his highly-polished manners, his gracefully ironical language, and above all, his incomparable levity, rendered him a living tradition of the old French court. He was a perfect model of the *grand seigneur* of past times. The indignation I expressed at the conduct of Metternich used to amuse him exceedingly:—'My dear duke,' he would say, 'you take these things too seriously. Metternich's conduct is base in the extreme;—but what then! Would you act the part of Don Quixote, and wage war against all the windmills you meet? The glorious days are past when we could dictate our own terms. We must now in our turn submit to be dictated to. What else can we do!' Poor Narbonne! He did not live to witness our disasters. Not even his gay spirit would have borne him up amidst the misfortunes of his country. He died in good time!

"With the exception of a few pleasant intervals, I was very miserable during my mission to Prague. The personal assurances of esteem and consideration which were lavished upon me, did not atone for the many annoyances incidental to my false position. Every link was not yet broken, and I was obliged sometimes to extend my hand to an irreconcilable enemy. This, I do assure you, is one of the greatest miseries attached to the hard lot of a statesman. Often, after taking my leave of the Austrian minister, I used to debate within myself, in the silence of night, whether

the following day should not close the mortal career of one or the other of us. Why, thought I, do I refrain from sending an honorable challenge to the man who could coolly indite the terms of the message he intends sending to France? Oh! what torture of mind I then suffered! 'My dear friend,' said the incorrigible Narbonne, 'my gray hairs cover a head more cool than yours. Rely on my old experience. I am convinced that diplomacy and negotiation are now out of the question. The Allied Powers have formed their determination on the subject of France. They place no faith in our professions of moderation. They have traced out a line of policy for themselves, and they will pursue it. Your death, or that of Metternich, could work no change in the state of affairs. We are lost.' It was impossible to be angry with Narbonne, though our views were utterly at variance. I deeply felt the loss of his society when he left Prague to proceed to the Emperor's head-quarters at Dresden, where he arrived a few days before me.

CHAPTER VIII.

A romantic adventure—The kiosque—The album—The mysterious lady—Her history—Singular letters addressed to the Duke de Vicenza—He is recommended to abandon Napoleon and to join the Emperor Alexander—Sudden departure of the Russian lady.

"During my sojourn at Prague," said the Duke de Vicenza, "there occurred to me a very strange adventure, which afforded a little diversion from my graver occupations. I will relate it to you," added he, with a smile, "but I forewarn you that I must make some reservations—I cannot tell all. Will you hear my story on this condition?"

"On any condition you choose to make, duke," replied I, eagerly. "Pray begin, I am all attention."

"One evening," said the duke, "in strict *incognito*, and attired in a brown surtout, with a pistol concealed in my bosom, I rode, followed by my groom, through one of the suburbs of Prague. I directed my course towards a house situated about half a league from the city. On arriving within sight of the walls of a park which surrounded a very pretty habitation, I alighted from my horse. Wait for me Frank, said I to my groom; but if I am not here by midnight, you may take the horses back to the stable. I walked on at a rapid pace (directing my steps according to certain instructions I had received)

until I reached a door, which, on my knocking, was immediately opened. A little female hand was stretched out to me, and a soft voice murmured in my ear: 'Say not a word; but let me conduct you.' I am a fool, thought I; but no matter, I must go on. After several turnings and windings we reached a kiosque, the door of which was closed. My conductress stopped, listened, looked cautiously round her, and then opened the door. We entered, she again closed the door, and then, trembling with alarm, she threw herself on a sofa. In a few moments, having somewhat recovered herself she gracefully motioned me to sit down, and resting her elbow on the cushions of the sofa, she languishingly leaned her head on her hand, and remained silent.

"This is a tolerably romantic commencement, is it not? But indeed the whole affair was nothing short of a romance, as you shall hear.

"After my first feeling of astonishment was somewhat dispelled, I began to survey the objects around me. A single light, burning in a globe of alabaster, illumined an apartment tastefully fitted up in the form of a tent, and decorated with various elegant and costly trifles, indicative of taste and wealth. On the table were an album, a box of colors, and several sketches. One of these designs was a view of the Palace of St. Petersburg, on the side occupied by the Empress' apartments; the Empress herself was represented standing in the balcony, and the likeness was striking. Here and there, in various parts of the room, were scattered books, journals, and music. I gazed on the lady, who now seemed to be quite overwhelmed by the consciousness of the strange step she had taken.—

She was young, and coquettishly dressed in a robe of clear white muslin, whose vapory folds displayed to advantage her slender and graceful form. Her hair, which was of a bright chestnut brown, was negligently gathered up behind, and confined by a gold comb, whilst a profusion of long ringlets encircled, and indeed almost entirely shaded, her countenance. She raised towards me her large dark eyes, in whose expression pride and resolution were forcibly depicted; and rearing her head with an air of dignity, which I thought rather amusing, considering the position in which she had imprudently placed herself, she darted at me an interrogating glance, which informed me that I was expected to speak first. I said—'Madame, I have obeyed your summons.'

"'And you have taken your time to reflect on it, duke.'

"'Your first message, madame—'

"'Did not presage a *bonne fortune*. You Frenchmen are so vain!'

"'Oh, madame,' I exclaimed, laughing, 'the mystification is perfect. It would indeed be unpardonable vanity to aspire to the honor of being distinguished by you. I would not for the world incur a second reproach, that of indiscreetly prolonging this agreeable visit. I am here, madame, in obedience to your commands, pray vouchsafe to inform me why I am summoned hither?'

"She turned upon me a look in which I could plainly read a mingled expression of hatred and curiosity.

"'I am a poor diplomatist, duke,' said she; 'I have not learned the art of dissembling and deceiving—of setting at naught solemn oaths and pledges of good faith. I am a true Muscovite, and I hate the French.' She uttered these latter

words in a most emphatic tone, and evidently under the influence of uncontrollable excitement. 'Poor Elise!' she resumed, 'thou shouldst not have charged me with this commission. If thou hadst possessed a true Russian heart, no Frenchman could ever have wrung tears from thy eyes.'

"Elise!—on hearing that name a sudden thrill pervaded my whole frame. Surely, thought I, some demon is at the ground of all this; some treacherous snare is laid to entrap me! As these reflections crossed my mind, I involuntarily placed my hand on my pistol.

"'Duke,' exclaimed the lady, energetically, 'I know not what idea you have formed of me; but of all the conjectures which the seeming levity of my conduct may warrant, there probably is none which is not an insult.' I made a sign of negation.

"'Do not interrupt, but hear me,' she continued. 'I am a native of Moscow—of Moscow, which is now devastated, and profaned by the French! I was twelve years of age when I lost my mother. My father, who occupied a distinguished rank at the court of Russia, placed me under the guardianship of—of—(Here the Duke de Vicenza paused, and begged I would excuse him mentioning the name of the person alluded to.) I was entered at the establishment for the education of noble young ladies at St. Petersburg. There I learned to love and revere my amiable protectress; and, indeed, I soon became as much attached to her as though she had been my mother. My affection for her was filial, enthusiastic, devoted, and submissive, and her name was daily mingled with my prayers.

"'This, duke, will suffice to explain to you

why you are here—why I have consented to see and to converse with an enemy of my country!

"'On the day on which I completed my fifteenth year, my father came to visit me: "Feodora," said he, "this evening you are to sign in the Emperor's cabinet your contract of marriage with Count ——, and in a week hence he will become your husband. Go and pay your respects to your mistress, and take leave of your companions; you must leave this establishment immediately." I was overjoyed; for I was now to be freed from school restraint, whilst at the same time I could see my beloved protectress as often as I wished. Eight days after this I was married. I was now no longer a child, no longer even a young girl, though only fifteen years of age. I became the friend and confidant of my adopted mother, my dear Elise. I was speedily introduced into the brilliant sphere of fashionable life, composed as it is of pleasure and grief, honors and humiliations, burning recollections and bitter regrets. Elise, the noble-minded Elise, had been the victim of love. The man on whom she conferred her whole heart and affection forsook her—sacrificed her to some necessity. You are moved, duke. You are possibly at a loss to comprehend how a man can break a heart that has been surrendered to him—a heart that has been faithful to its vows and to the religion of love! Poor, confiding Elise! The man she adored once said to her,—"Ask for my life, my blood, but do not ask me for what I cannot give you; for I would rather die than refuse you anything." Yet scarcely had two years elapsed, when Elise, kneeling at the feet of this man, said to him—"Do not depart, Armand. Behold me at your feet! You know I cannot live without you. I cannot exist where

you are not. Grant me this sacrifice, the only one I will ever seek in return for the many I have made to you. Your country, then, is dearer to you than I—than my love! Rank, wealth, honors, are offered to you here. Accept them, Armand, accept them, I conjure you! We count many illustrious French names among the inhabitants of Russia. Remain with us, then, dear Armand. Your duty, you say, calls you 800 leagues from me. Alas! I fear you never truly loved me. When you offered me your life you were insincere; for in this fatal hour there is something which you prefer to me. You tell me now that honor is more powerful than love, that you can die for me, but not live dishonored with me. Alas! why did you not tell me when I first laid my head on your bosom, that the love you vowed to me was merely conditional. Had you told me so I would have plunged into the Neva." She said all this, duke, and many more touching things. Yet this man forsook her!'

"I was almost petrified," said the Duke de Vicenza. "The scene which this mysterious female had described was still fresh in my recollection—it carried me back to a happy period of my life. I cannot tell how I armed myself with courage to resist the seductions of the passion which then possessed me, for I adored Elise. My love for her was of that ardent and engrossing kind which will not permit us either to calculate or to measure danger; and this *liaison* was attended with great peril both to her and to me. Circumstances must have been very imperious—honor must have appealed with a very loud voice, before I could have resolved to break those sweet bands—to renounce that happiness for which I daily placed my life in jeopardy.

But a woman of ardent feeling, who gives more than her life in exchange for love, cannot comprehend that there must arrive a fatal hour when she must be sacrificed to inexorable destiny! I was lost in my reveries, when the voice of Feodora roused me.

"'Well, duke,' said she, 'have you nothing to communicate to me?'

"'Madame,' replied I, 'you have pronounced a name with which is connected a secret that must for ever remain buried in my heart. That name which I used fondly to repeat in the days of my happiness, shall never again be uttered by my lips. Have you been entrusted with any message for me? The sacrifice of my honor excepted, she knows well that I am devoted to her in life and death.'

"'Ah!' said my interlocutor, contemptuously, 'again there is a restriction to your devotedness!' She approached the table, and, touching a spring, opened a drawer, which was ingeniously concealed by the markings of the wood. From the drawer, she took a richly-embossed portfolio, and, presenting it to me, she said, 'This contains a letter. I will take charge of your answer, duke.'

"I eagerly seized the portfolio, and took leave of the countess. She conducted me from the kiosque with the same precautions as those observed on my entrance. This is not precisely a *bonne fortune*, thought I, as I mounted my horse, which speedily carried me back to my hotel.—During the whole night, my imagination was busily employed in retracing the circumstances of this strange interview. This mysterious woman had evidently been made the depositary of an important secret. The letter presented to me,

left no doubt of the unbounded confidence reposed in Feodora. And what a strange being was she! So frank and bold in expressing her hatred of the French, and yet so beautiful and captivating in spite of her rebellious spirit.

"I carried to Feodora my answer to the letter she had given me in the portfolio. I don't know how it happened, but I took pleasure in trying to tame this fierce little Muscovite, and the consequence was that my visits to her became more and more frequent, and at length daily. In truth, Feodora was a very charming woman.

"One morning, a few days previously to my departure from Prague, my valet delivered to me a packet which a courier had left late on the preceding night. On tearing off the envelop, I found three letters; two of them, which were in the same handwriting as that I had first received, showed by their date that they had not been punctually forwarded. Poor Feodora had not been over anxious to remind me of the love I owed to another. She was well aware that the transient impression she herself had produced, could not efface the profound sentiment which was concealed in the inmost recesses of my heart. But even as it was, this little infidelity oppressed me with the weight of remorse, and for the thousandth time in my life, I felt how much women are superior to men.

"I mechanically opened Feodora's letter. It ran as follows:—

"'When you peruse these lines, Armand, there will be between you and Feodora the abyss which separates repentance and guilt. Yes, Armand, I say guilt, for can there be a greater crime than to betray a benefactress in her confidence and in her love? It is base to forget the duties

of daughter and wife for the enemy of one's country—for a Frenchman! But I need not vent on you reproaches which you cannot comprehend.

"'The period of expiation commenced yesterday. You were to have come, and you failed to do so. Throughout the long night, during which I looked for you in vain, I uttered imprecations on you. On my knees I confessed the fault of which I have been guilty, and I felt all the horror of remorse. I now look upon you as a demon in the form of an angel, and the remembrance of you will henceforth haunt me like a frightful phantom. Noble Elise, you are avenged.'

"When I perused this extraordinary note, I could with difficulty persuade myself that I was not dreaming. Indeed, the singular circumstances attending my introduction to this woman, are enveloped in a veil of mystery, which time has not yet raised. Feodora's letter was accompanied by a little billet, containing the following lines:—

"'The cause of the Emperor Napoleon is lost —nothing can save France from ruin. Your efforts are vain. Abandon the Corsican tyrant. The magnanimous Alexander will receive you, and in serving him you may usefully serve your country. The illustrious General Moreau felt that he had a divine mission to fulfil. He has crossed the seas to overthrow the oppressor of his country. Moreau is now in the camp of the Allied Powers.'

"I was lost in a maze of conjectures. Who was this Feodora? I made inquiries respecting her. 'The Russian lady set off twenty-four hours ago,' replied the porter of the house in which she resided. I questioned some Russians

of my acquaintance; but, in the first place, I did not know her family name, and next, I had strong reasons for being guarded in my investigations. In fine, the beautiful and haughty Muscovite is to this day known to me only as the mysterious Feodora."

CHAPTER IX.

The Duke rejoins the Emperor at Gorlitz—The Duke of Otranto—He is appointed Governor of the Illyrian Provinces—Fouché and Baron von Stein—Conversation between Napoleon and the Duke de Vicenza—The duke announces several disastrous events—Desertion of General Jomini—Bernadotte declares war against France—Moreau in the camp of the Allies—Napoleon's plan for marching on Berlin—Murat appointed to command the imperial guards—Interview between Napoleon and Maria Louisa at Mentz—The portrait of the infant King of Rome—Napoleon's talent for mimicry—The Russian Ambassador, Prince Kourakin—Operatic performances at the Court of the Tuileries—Grassini, Crivelli, Tacchinardi—The beautiful Countess of L. . . . —Prince Kourakin's diamonds—His presents to the Countess L. . . .—The Emperor commands the lady to return them—Austria declares war against France—General Gourgand sent to the King of Saxony—Napoleon leaves Gorlitz for Dresden.

"I WILL now," said the Duke de Vicenza, relate to you what occurred after I joined the Emperor at Gorlitz, together with some curious details of the terrific catastrophe of Leipsic. On hearing them you will probably concur with me in thinking that if contemporaries have the right to impute faults to Napoleon, those faults have been far exceeded by the magnitude of the expiation.

"On the 18th of August I reached the headquarters at Gorlitz, and if I did not bring from Bohemia the official declaration of war on the part of Austria, the information I had acquired left me no doubt on the subject. When I entered the Emperor's apartment at Gorlitz, the

Prince de Neufchatel was in the act of despatching orders to the different corps. 'Berthier,' said the Emperor, 'send off orderlies this instant. Detain Gourgand; tell him to await my orders.' Then advancing to me, he added—'Well, Caulincourt, what news have you?'

"At that moment a cabinet usher announced the Duke of Otranto. My looks must have reflected the feelings that were passing in my mind, for the Emperor said to me, 'Ah! you will see some others whom you little expect.' The sight of Fouché certainly surprised as well as annoyed me; I could not conceive why his presence was required at the head-quarters of the army. I felt towards Fouché one of those instinctive aversions which almost always find their justification in after circumstances. Intercourse with the world never taught me to disguise my antipathies with any degree of success. Fouché, therefore, was well aware that I did not like him, and he on his part cordially returned my aversion.

"'Duke of Otranto,' said the Emperor, addressing Fouché, 'in appointing you governor of my Illyrian provinces I give a signal proof of my confidence in your capacity. You must oppose the machinations of Baron Stein with your utmost ability. Keep your eye upon intriguers. Banish all plotters without mercy. Send them to any town in France, with notes to the prefect and commissary-general of the department, and at the same time direct to them the attention of the general police of Paris. I have fire-brands enough in my capital without getting more from Germany. Your powers give you great latitude; and, except in cases of very grave importance, you may decide without refer-

ring to me. There must be firmness, and, above all, promptitude, in the operations of the police. No concessions—no compromise with agitators. Half measures are always injurious—and they never gain over an enemy. Politics and sentiment do not accord; you know that well. Go, then, Duke of Otranto; I count on your zeal and ability.'

"'Your Majesty knows that I am devoted to you in life and death; and the post to which you have appointed me will afford opportunities of giving renewed proofs of my devotedness.'

"'I know it—I know it; you will send me every day an accurate report of the feelings of the inhabitants for and against my government. The well-disposed you may stroke with a cat's paw; but show claws to the disaffected. Imbue your mind thoroughly with the truth that public feeling is at the disposal of him who knows how to dispose of it. Proclaim on the house-tops my resolution never to abandon the Illyrian Provinces. You understand! This is the only means of checking defections and defeating guilty schemes and hopes. See that the supplies of the garrisons are properly kept up. Neglect nothing that is useful, and report to me every fact with which you think I ought to be made acquainted. In present circumstances, a governor-general of conquered provinces must be like a vigilant *vidette* at an advanced post.'

"The governor-general of the Illyrian provinces took his leave, placing his hand on his heart, and bowing to the very ground; but in the sinister expression of Fouché's eyes hideous things could be read. Two years afterwards, this man insulted and persecuted his unfortunate sovereign and master.

"When Fouché had withdrawn, the Emperor took up some papers, which he glanced over without saying a word. This was quite characteristic of Napoleon. The fact is, he had fully seized the ideas which were passing in my mind, and though we had never entered into any explanation of our mutual opinion of Fouché, yet I feel assured that on this occasion Napoleon shared all my apprehensions. But his self-love (and Napoleon had a large share of that quality) would not permit him to condescend to a sort of defence of the Duke of Otranto, who had been justly disgraced; nevertheless, my silent disapprobation annoyed him. He wished that I should provoke an explanation, and I was determined not to do so. This was not often the sort of footing on which we stood, in reference to one another, and he frequently called me *barre de fer*.

"According to his custom, he explained to me a few days afterwards the motives which had determined him to give the government of the Illyrian provinces to the Duke of Otranto. This appointment was in reality an act of policy. Mallet's affair was present in the Emperor's mind. This bold enterprise showed what a man of daring spirit might attempt with success, and the Emperor deemed it unsafe to have behind him in Paris a man so dissatisfied and dangerous as Fouché. He adroitly concealed his distrust under the plausible reason of opposing the artful police of Fouché to the occult but all-powerful police of Baron Stein, the leader of the sects of illuminati which were then rising up on all sides. Stein constituted himself a director of public opinion, and by the aid of quasi democratic professions he had stirred up an insurrectionary spi-

rit in numerous public schools and universities. There was at that time a rage for secret associations in Germany, and the indefatigable Stein was found at the head of them all.

"The Emperor, whose eagle eye could penetrate revolutions, said to me—'It answers my policy to have it understood that I am opposing Fouché to Baron Stein; but, after all, what can be done by Fouché and all our French police in Illyria against the formidable influence of the secret societies which infest Germany? At the present moment these associations are wonderfully serviceable to the Allied Powers, who employ them as active and devoted auxiliaries in opposing me. They will use them as machines for working their own ends, until the time arrive when they will find it convenient to consign all these young fanatical heads to the axe of the executioner.'

"As to Fouché, he was perfectly aware of the real motives which influenced his appointment to the government of Illyria. He therefore left Paris with anything but satisfied feelings, though he affected gratification. He bowed beneath the rod which had hitherto spared him, and which now inflicted so paternal a chastisement. The time had not yet arrived when he could with impunity defy and insult his benefactor. On this subject I can relate to you many horrible traits to which I was witness at Fontainbleau and Paris, after Waterloo.

"Having received the Emperor's instruction respecting the duties of his new appointment, Fouché took his leave. After he had withdrawn I was left alone with the Emperor; I remained silent, expecting he would address me. After a short pause, he said with an air of impatience—

'Well, duke, I presume you bring bad news from Prague, since you seem so unwilling to tell it.'

"I was waiting till your Majesty should question me.

"'Speak out, speak out. Has Austria officially declared herself against me?'

"I believe, Sire, that Austria will make common cause with Prussia and Russia.

"'That may be your opinion,' said he, sharply, 'but it is not therefore a fact.'

"It is a fact, Sire; and your Majesty may be assured that, on a subject of such importance, my opinion is not founded on mere conjecture.

"'On what, then, is it founded?'

"Two days preceding that fixed for the rupture of the armistice, Blucher, at the head of a hundred thousand men, marched into Silesia, and took possession of Breslau.

"'This is indeed a serious affair! Are you sure of it, Caulincourt?'

"I had, Sire, a warm altercation with Metternich on the subject, the day before my departure from Prague.

"On the very day on which Breslau was taken, General Jomini deserted the staff of Marshal Ney, and he is at this moment with the Emperor Alexander.

"'Jomini! a man overwhelmed with my favors! —the traitor! To abandon his post on the eve of a battle! To go over to the enemy with a report of our forces and means! Incredible!' As he uttered these words, there was, mingled with the feeling of deep indignation portrayed in his countenance, an expression of increasing uneasiness, which he evidently could not subdue. I was unable to proceed.

"'Is this all,' resumed he, holding out his hand to me. 'Speak, Caulincourt! Let me know all! I must know all!'

"Sire, the coalition has taken a wide range. Sweden, too, is in arms against us.

"'What do you say?' interrupted he, with impetuosity. 'Bernadotte! Bernadotte in arms against France. This is the ass's kick, indeed!'

"Bernadotte, resumed I, not satisfied with turning his arms against his country, has recruited for deserters among our Allies, as if unable singly to endure the maledictions of his countrymen.

"'What mean you?'

"General Moreau is in the camp of the Allies!

"'Moreau with the Allies! This is not possible. Caulincourt, I cannot believe this. Bernadotte, the *King* of *Sweden*, may color his odious treason by some specious pretext; but Moreau—Moreau take revenge on his countrymen—on his country! No, no, it cannot be. Moreau is weak, devoid of energy and exalted ambition. Yet there is a wide difference between him and Jomini—a renegade—a traitor. No, this report is not to be credited. How did you hear it?'

"I did not, as you will readily suppose," said the Duke de Vicenza, addressing himself to me, "reply categorically to this question. The distressing nature of the intelligence I had brought from Prague prevented me from amusing the Emperor with the episode of the romantic Feodora.

"'The occupation of Breslau,' resumed the Emperor, 'is important in many points of view. It is an event big with incalculable consequences. We must now fight again, and we must conquer under pain of being driven beyond the Rhine.

But after all, what does the Emperor of Austria mean? Did he not freely consent to the treaties? And have I violated them? Under what pretence does the cabinet of Vienna mask its conduct towards me?'

"I remained silent. The Emperor knew from my correspondence that I had exhausted on this question every possible argument without obtaining satisfaction.

"'Well!' exclaimed he, 'the die is cast. I have three hundred thousand infantry, forty thousand cavalry, and a formidable artillery force. Saxony is, and will continue, faithful to me. That country shall be the scene of my operations. I will force them to make peace. All is not lost, Caulincourt! I have here,' continued he, pointing to his forehead, 'abundance of resources and resolution. I will not despair. I have conceived a bold project—one of those ideas which come as it were by inspiration, and which command fortune. But to put this scheme into execution, great sacrifices will be necessary. Look here, Caulincourt!' He passed his finger over a map of Prussia which was lying open on the table. 'From Duben I may march direct on Berlin, and take possession of the Prussian capital without firing a cannon-ball. I shall dismay Bernadotte and Blucher, whose improvidence has left Berlin uncovered. Blucher is a good swordsman, but a bad general. On making myself master of the heart of Prussia, I shall relieve my fortresses.' He observed the surprise that was depicted on my countenance. 'Oh! I am aware that you will think this a bold idea; but it is only by going out of beaten tracks that we can disconcert a plan of campaign long meditated by the enemy. Taking advantage of the first moment

of stupor, I may, by a desperate blow, change the aspect of things. Look at the map, Caulincourt; follow me attentively. Duben is a point of junction which will serve to mask my projects. The enemy will imagine that I am preparing to make Leipsic my *point d'appui*, whilst, with all my forces combined, I shall be marching straight on Berlin. This is a stupendous project; but if I am understood and seconded, I am convinced that it will succeed, and that it will decide the fate of the campaign.'

"The Emperor's plan was indeed admirable," said the Duke de Vicenza; "it was one of those lofty conceptions which raise Napoleon in the rank of military commanders higher than Alexander the Great.

"His plan for carrying Berlin was one of the grandest combinations of his genius. We considered it under every point of view, and I fully shared the Emperor's opinion that its success was at the least very probable. In the desperate circumstances in which we were placed, temerity might serve us better than prudence. The result proved that in all possible hypotheses the plan of marching upon Berlin could not be more disastrous than our retrogade movement on Leipsic. But to carry this plan into effect it was necessary, as the Emperor observed, to find men resolutely determined to make the greatest sacrifices. I will, at a future opportunity, describe to you the scene I witnessed when at Duben. The Emperor's plans became known just at the moment when they were on the point of execution. Napoleon must not be made the scapegoat to bear the responsibility of all the disasters of France. Let every one answer for his own sins!

"The night was far advanced, but neither the

Emperor nor I thought of retiring to rest. Napoleon, whose mind was disturbed by a thousand anxious thoughts, paced with hurried steps up and down his chamber. Suddenly stopping short, and without introducing the subject by any preliminary remark, he said: 'Murat has arrived.' Then, after some hesitation, he added—'I have given him the command of my guard.'

"I could not repress a gesture of astonishment.

"'Ah, parbleu! I thought you would be surprised! At first I gave him a bad reception, but finally I yielded to his importunities. He at least will not betray me. He is a brave man and a good soldier. Caulincourt, there are certain forebodings which it is our duty to endeavor to overcome. As long as I am fortunate, Murat will follow my fortune. But the business of the present is sufficient to occupy me, I need not be looking into the future.'

"The Emperor must have put a great restraint upon his feelings before he could have consented to receive Murat. The King of Naples had abandoned, at Smorghoni, the mutilated remains of our unfortunate army, of which he had been made commander-in-chief. Since then his conduct towards Napoleon had been, to say the least of it, equivocal. Latterly, he had offered his services to Austria, to act as mediator between France and the coalition. This will scarcely seem credible, but it is nevertheless true. Not only was the proposition absurd, (for he was perfectly aware that he had no influence over the Emperor,) but there was a guilty afterthought in the absurdity. This subsequently became evident. We also knew his intrigues with Lord Bentinck, with whom he had an interview in the Isle of Pouza. On being made acquainted with

these proceedings, the Emperor became greatly irritated, and said—'Murat is a traitor and a madman; he ought either to be shot or sent to Charenton.' Events hurried on with astounding rapidity. The Emperor had arrived at that extremity when he was forced every day to put in practice the old adage 'necessity knows no law.' It was indeed a hard necessity which forced him to refrain from expressing his contempt for such ingratitude. But let me say no more! The grave has closed over Murat and his errors!

"Whilst I was in Bohemia the Emperor had seen the Empress at Mentz. He told me, with all the ardor of a young man, the happiness he had experienced in meeting *his Louise.* This subject brought about a short truce to care, and Napoleon's radiant countenance presented no trace of the painful emotion he had suffered at the commencement of our conversation. He drew from his waistcoat pocket a little miniature portrait of the King of Rome, painted by Isabey. It was the faithful representation of a most beautiful child. Napoleon was affectionately attached to the Empress and his son. The occasional impoliteness of his manners to females in public was quite at variance with the kindness and suavity which distinguished him in his domestic relations.

"Only those who knew Napoleon in the intercourse of private life can render justice to his character. For my own part, I know him, as it were, by heart; and in proportion as time separates us, he appears to me like a beautiful dream. And would you believe that, in my recollections of Napoleon, that which seems to me to approach most nearly to ideal excellence is not the hero, filling the world with his gigantic fame, but the

man, viewed in the relations of private life. This is a contrast which often affords me a theme for curious and interesting reflection.

"In his intervals of gaiety, Napoleon's flow of spirits sometimes betrayed him into almost boyish playfulness. He was an excellent mimic, when he chose to exercise his talent in that way, and woe to those who fell under the lash of his pleasantry. I have seen him give admirable imitations of Cambaceres and Kourakin; and as he *knew everything*, (to use his own expression,) he often amused us by very droll details."

"Oh, duke!" said I, "how much I should like to hear a few of those droll details. Pray oblige me by relating some."

"It is not very easy to comply with that request, I assure you," replied the duke, smiling; "if I were to begin you might soon find it necessary to call me to order."

"Nay! surely you can remember some which are not likely to incur any such interruption."

"Well," resumed the duke, "I will relate to you an incident which afforded the Emperor no little merriment at the expense of his Excellency Prince Kourakin, the Russian Ambassador.

"In the year 1812 some dramatic performances were given at Court. You know the arrangements which used to be observed on these occasions. The Empress, with her ladies, occupied a large box in the centre of the *salle*. The boxes on either side were filled by the ladies of the high functionaries of the empire, all specially invited by their Majesties. At the extremity of the tier, on the right hand side, was the Emperor's box, and the corresponding one on the opposite side was assigned to the *corps diplomatique*.

"Poor Prince Kourakin, who was certainly the most ugly of men, was afflicted with the infatuation of adorning himself with diamonds. The Emperor used to say that the chandeliers were eclipsed by the splendor of Kourakin, and that when the Russian ambassador attended the play the expense of a hundred wax lights might very well be spared. One evening the performance consisted of an act of the opera of *Jerusalem Delivered.* The charming Grassini (who then sang only at the Court theatre,) Crivelli, and Porto, sustained the principal characters. Tacchinardi conducted the choruses, and the performance was altogether so exquisite that it absorbed the interest and rivetted the attention of all present. Kourakin, radiant as the sun, was seated in front of the ambassadors' box, with an amusing air of self-complacency. He paid no attention to the music, to the charms of which he was utterly insensible. His eyes, however, appeared to be under the influence of a fascination from which his ears were exempt. Etiquette, of course, prohibited him from turning his back to the Emperor, and, at the risk of getting a stiff neck, he sat with his head turned towards the Countess L——, whose box was in the second tier, and to whom he directed languishing glances with the most amusing air imaginable. Sometimes he beat time on the front of his box, with his great clumsy fingers coverd with brilliant rings; and sometimes he twirled his aiguillettes, which were studded with costly diamonds. Duroc and I, who were stationed behind the Emperor, had several times remarked the grotesque glances directed by Kourakin to the young and pretty Countess L——, who was not without a little of coquetry in her disposition. Yet the more censorious observer

could never have suspected her to be guilty of levity in reference to Kourakin.

"At the conclusion of the performance the Emperor conducted the Empress to her apartments. Her Majesty wore that evening on her bosom a bouquet formed of jewels, of various colors, set in imitation of flowers. It was a magnificent ornament, and the Emperor, who was a connoisseur in jewels, expressed his admiration of it. Then turning to Kourakin, he entered into a dissertation on the beauty and value of the diamonds with which the ambassador was profusely decorated: 'Really, Prince,' said he, 'you carry about with you the mines of Golconda.'

"Kourakin bowed.

"'You are quite dazzling.'

"Another bow, still lower than the former.

"'You are irresistible.'

"'Ah, Sire!'

"Kourakin reared his head like a peacock, at the same time directing an amorous glance at the elegant Countess L——, who seemed to experience no little difficulty in preserving her gravity.

"About an hour afterwards the Emperor entered his cabinet in high spirits, and entertained Duroc and me with the description of a little farce that had formed a sequel to the *Jerusalem Delivered.*

"'Kourakin,' said he, 'has actually persuaded himself that he is in love with Madame L——; and, after sighing and languishing for some time without success, he at length ventured on a declaration. The malicious woman wrote at the bottom of the *billet-doux*, which she returned to him—"Your Excellency has made a little mistake; this declaration is intended for Mademoi-

selle Bigotini." Kourakin, instead of being disheartened, sent another message, to which no answer was returned. His Excellency then determined to change his plan of attack. He looked in the mirror, and began to suspect the possibility of recommending his suit by something more agreeable to the lady than his personal appearance. Accordingly, every morning there arrived at the residence of Madame L—— a colossal bouquet, accompanied by a basket filled with a variety of elegant and costly trifles, selected from the Magasin of Sike, the expense of which speedily exceeded 20,000 francs. But the best of the joke is, that Madame L—— alleged, in the most innocent manner possible, "that she was indebted for all these pretty presents to the gallantry of the general her husband, who had recourse to these agreeable surprises to keep alive her recollection of him during his long absence."'

"At this we could not help laughing heartily, for we well knew that, throughout the whole course of his life, General L—— had never had reason to reproach himself with any act of extravagance.

"'Yesterday evening,' pursued the Emperor, 'Madame L—— went to the opera, and afterwards to the Princess Pauline's ball, at Neuilly. On her return home, at about three o'clock in the morning, the servant handed out of the carriage, along with his mistress's cloak, a Russian leather box.' "What is that, Jean?" inquired the lady. "This box was on the seat of the carriage, along with the cloak, Madame."—"Oh, yes, very true. I had forgotten it—it is quite right, Jean."

"'The box was carried up to Madame L——'s apartment, and when the countess found herself

alone, curiosity naturally prompted her to open it. Its contents almost dazzled her. "*Mon Dieu!*" she exclaimed, "what magnificent diamonds!" And then, with a deep sigh, she added, "How unfortunate that he is so very ugly!"' As the Emperor uttered these words, he mimicked so admirably the whining voice and mincing manners of Madame L——, that we were ready to expire with laughter.

"And what has been the upshot of all this, Sire? inquired I.

"'*Par Dieu!* that is the best of the joke! You shall hear. This morning I caused an intimation to be given to Madame L——, that it would be advisable for her to send back the Russia leather box to its owner, unless she felt inclined to retire to her old castle in Auvergne, to reflect on the dangers of coquetry. I cannot permit ladies who enjoy the honor of being admitted to pay their court to the Empress, to amuse themselves with these little *espiegleries*, which are worthy of the noble dames of the Regent's Court. Kourakin may be let off with the payment of his bills to Madame Bernard, Sike, and others. It is right that he should have a lesson, but he must keep his diamonds.'

"We renewed our laughter, and the Emperor, rubbing his hands with an air of triumph, said—'You see, gentlemen, I know every thing that is going on. You cannot keep any secrets from me.'

"But," said the Duke de Vicenza, "this anecdote has led me very far from the thread of my narrative. From the Tuileries, in January, 1802, to Gorlitz, in August, 1813, there is an immeasurable distance. In 1812, all was prosperity and happiness, and the future was full of bril-

liant promise. In 1813, death had thinned our ranks—all was gloomy and menacing, and the clouds which overhung the present obscured the future. Alas! what disasters had that future in store for us!

"A few days after my arrival at Gorlitz, the declaration of war by Austria against France was officially notified. The most disheartening intelligence poured in from all sides. Treason was every where at work. We could now no longer count on Bavaria. Every succeeding hour was marked by some base defection, some new misfortune. And yet the future historian will coolly record this terrible phasis, which dealt so many death-blows among the spectators of the last convulsions of the empire!

"Prince Schwartzenberg commanded the Austrian army, amounting to 130,000 men, and 80,000 Russians were marching on Dresden. The Emperor sent Murat with a part of the imperial guard to protect Dresden, and to give confidence to the excellent King of Saxony, who had declared his resolution to make common cause with Napoleon. Two days after the departure of the King of Naples, a courier arrived with intelligence that the enemy was at the gates of Dresden. 'Am I doomed not to have a day's respite?' said the Emperor, in a tone of deep despondency. He sent for Gourgand, a brave and intelligent officer, to whom he was much attached.

"'Gourgand,' said the Emperor, 'depart this instant for Dresden, and travel with the utmost possible speed, for you must be there to-night. As soon as you arrive, at whatever hour it may be, you must request an interview with the King of Saxony. Tell him from me that to-morrow

I shall set out in person for Pyrna. Tell the King of Naples, Marshal St. Cyr, the Duke de Bassano, and Durosnel, that they must not suffer themselves to be intimidated by a *coup de main* which the enemy may attempt upon Dresden; tell them they must hold out for four-and-twenty hours longer. I shall bring with me forty-thousand men, and I shall be able to assemble the whole army in thirty-six hours before the walls of Dresden. See the commander of the engineers, and with him inspect the redoubts and fortifications round the city. When you have examined every thing, make notes of your observations, and return without loss of time to meet me at Stolpen. I shall be there to-night. Go, Gourgand, and use the utmost speed.'

"Next night, at eleven o'clock, the indefatigable Gourgand returned to the head-quarters, at Stolpen. This mission, which Gourgand executed with all his characteristic intelligence, was of the highest importance. He brought back a most alarming account. Dresden was exposed to imminent danger. The Russian army was advancing by forced marches. Platoff, with his hordes, a truly Satanic advanced guard, spread fire and destruction wherever they appeared.—The Cossacks had already entered and set fire to a village situated about half a league from the great gardens; and St. Cyr betrayed a disposition to evacuate his position, not having forces sufficient to defend it.

"'Well!' said the Emperor, when Gourgand had closed his narrative of disasters, 'what is the opinion of the Duke de Bassano?'

"'Sire, he does not think it will be practicable to hold out twenty-four hours longer.'

"'Impossible! And you, Gourgand! what do you think?'

"'I firmly believe, Sire, that Dresden will be taken to-morrow, unless your Majesty be there in person.'

"'Gourgand, be cautious how you advance this opinion if you do not feel assured it is well founded.'

"'Sire, I have seen all, and carefully examined all; and I am ready to answer for it with my life that your Majesty's presence alone can save Dresden.'

"This reply decided the Emperor. He reflected for a few moments and then sent for General Haxo. Drawing his finger over the map, he described, with amazing rapidity and clearness, the movements of the different scattered corps which he was assembling, as if by the touch of a fairy's wand, to fly, as he expressed it, to the defence of Dresden. He analysed clearly the enemy's plan, and ranged in opposition to it his own combinations. A moment sufficed to enable him to scan at a glance the whole circle of operations.

"'Set off immediately, Haxo,' said he, 'and see that my orders are obeyed. I make you responsible for their immediate execution. Tell Vandamme that, intrenched as he is in the inaccessible defiles of Peteswalde, he may await the result of the operations at Dresden. For him I have reserved the honor of picking up the sword of the vanquished. Cool collectedness is necessary, and Vandamme is of an ardent temperament. Explain to him clearly what I expect him to do. Depart without delay, General Haxo.'

"Then turning to Gourgand, he thus addressed him:—

"'Order a fresh horse, my dear Gourgand, and return to Dresden with your utmost speed. Make known my intention of commanding in person. My old guard will precede me. Tell the King of Naples that he must sustain the honor of our arms until my arrival. Let every one centuple his activity, and be at his post. I cannot be present everywhere. Proclaim to the troops that to-morrow evening I shall be with them. Go, Gourgand. Use despatch. Lame a dozen horses, if it must be so, but reach your journey's end speedily. Remember, the fate of Dresden depends on your punctuality.'

"Orderlies were despatched in every direction. The old guard which had been hastily assembled, defiled before our windows, raising shouts of 'Vive l'Empereur! Forward on Dresden!' The whole town was in commotion. Every one was at his post. The will of one man acted, as it were, with the power of electricity on the will of all. The events which I am here describing are of such recent date that we do not regard them with the degree of wonder they are naturally calculated to excite. The time will come when they will appear nothing short of miraculous. It is but just also to consider the share of merit due to every individual who took part in the glories of Napoleon. It must be acknowledged that never did a chief meet with more ready and devoted obedience on the part of those who were subordinate to his authority. With the rapidity of lightning orders were transmitted from one place to another, without any calculation of difficulties or distances, or any concern about fatigue or privation. All vied with each other for the

honor of occupying the most dangerous posts, and executing the most difficult missions. Life was lightly prized when balanced in the scale with duty. It would be necessary to name every officer in the army to render justice to each individually.

"I will not," said the Duke de Vicenza, "enter into the details of the terrible battle of Dresden, which lasted three days. You have, of course, read many accounts of it. Besides," added he, with a smile, "I know you would rather hear particulars relating to the Emperor personally; or, to borrow your own expression, *les choses de Napoleon.*"

"Thank you, duke," said I shaking hands with him; "and though you consider me incapable of adequately comprehending the details of a battle, I am nevertheless an attentive auditor of whatsoever you may please to narrate. Be assured I shall never forget either your inexhaustible kindness or *les choses de Napoleon.* Both will remain indelibly engraven in my memory and in my heart."

CHAPTER X.

Napoleon's entrance into Dresden—His enthusiastic reception —Preparations for the battle—Dreadful state of the weather —Napoleon's superstition—Murat on the field of battle— He attacks and defeats a portion of the Austrian force— Cannonade commanded by the Emperor—Familiarity between the soldiers and the Emperor—Contrast between Napoleon's grand Equerry and the invalid at Plombières—The grenadiers of the old guard in the court-yard at Dresden— The old quarter-master—The fragment of the *Redingatte Grise*—The postilion of Alencon—Curious relics—Shameless violation of capitulations and treaties.

"We entered Dresden," said the Duke de Vicenza, "on the morning of the 20th of August. It would be impossible to describe the demonstrations of joy evinced by the troops when they beheld the Emperor at the further end of the bridge. Both the young and old guard marched forward to meet him. At one moment the bridge was so crowded that our horses pressed closely against each other, and could not move a step.

"The joyous enthusiasm of the troops was raised to the highest possible degree. 'There he is! there he is! that is he!' they exclaimed; and shouts resounded along the whole bank of the river. The authority of the officers was insufficient to restrain the troops. 'Let them alone! let them alone!' said the Emperor; 'they will presently make room for me to lead them on to the face of the enemy.' These words were repeated from mouth to mouth, and in a few mo-

ments the troops were almost stifling each other in their efforts to make room for us.

"Napoleon's entry into Dresden was truly triumphal; and it will never be forgotten by those who witnessed it. As we approached the city nothing was heard but clapping of hands and cries of enthusiasm. Men, women, and children, mingled with the troops, and escorted us to the palace. The King of Saxony came out to receive Napoleon, and embraced him in the presence of his assembled subjects. The consternation and alarm which had hitherto prevailed were now succeeded by boundless joy and confidence. The enemy's lines already crowned the heights which surrounded the city. It was at once a grand and consolatory sight to witness the defiling of the imperial guard and the proud cuirassiers, commanded by Latour Maubourg, marching with upraised heads, and casting looks of defiance on the heights, where vast numbers of the enemy's forces were collected.

"The troops continued to defile until evening, when they all occupied the positions allotted to them. The Emperor went to inspect every point, with the view of preparing for a general attack. The Russians and Austrians likewise made their arrangements. The Prussian columns were posted in the Gross-Garten. A general movement pervaded the two camps; and there was something indescribably solemn and gloomy in this expectation of a great event. Friends pressed each other's hands in silence. We were no longer marching to those brilliant conquests which, in every campaign, extended the domination of France. Each man seemed now to be intent only on defending his own home and family. This was a bitterly mortifying reflection.

"The battle commenced at three o'clock, and was maintained with unexampled obstinacy till nine at night. We returned to the palace about midnight. The Emperor had had no rest for six-and-thirty hours, and yet he sat up the whole night dictating orders. It required a constitution of iron to bear up under the fatigues to which we had been exposed for the space of five months.

I several times fell soundly asleep as I sat on my horse, whilst the report of cannon was thundering in my ears. But how could we think of ourselves when we saw the Emperor exposing his life and health to continual danger? At four o'clock he threw himself on his camp bed, and in about twenty minutes after he suddenly awoke, exclaiming, 'Caulincourt, are you there? Proceed to the camp, and take with you the plan which I have drawn up with Dalbe. The corps of Marmont and Victor have arrived to-night. Examine the amount of their forces, and see whether they are strong enough to maintain the positions which I have assigned to them on the field. This is essential, Caulincourt. See with your own eyes; and trust only to your own observation.'

'The rain poured in torrents, and the camp was the image of desolation. Our men, who had arrived by forced marches, and were exhausted by fatigue, were bivouacking on the muddy ground. The fires were extinguished by the torrent of rain. I took out my notes and gave some orders relating to the Imperial escort for the day. I returned to the Emperor, whom I found standing near a window, looking anxiously at the state of the weather. Day was beginning to dawn. 'What terrible weather,' said he, in a tone of dissatisfaction; 'this is an evil presage.'

"Napoleon was superstitious, and he did not like people who regarded superstition as a weakness. He used to say that none but fools affected to despise it.

"At six in the morning the Emperor mounted his horse, and we left Dresden by the gate of Fribourg to proceed to the camp. The firing recommenced with terrific fury. It was on this second day of the battle that Moreau received his mortal wound. The King of Naples performed prodigies of valor; he had two horses killed under him. Murat was truly sublime on the field of battle. His tall figure, his noble countenance, brilliant eyes, and elegant costume, altogether imparted to him a picturesque appearance. When it was his task to conduct a charge his courage prompted him to the most glorious feats: he commanded universal admiration.

"In the direction of Gorlitz we had a terrible engagement with the Austrians; and we lost a vast number of troops without succeeding in forcing the enemy's centre. The Emperor sent for Murat. 'Go thither,' said he, pointing towards Gorlitz with his lunette. 'Take with you Latour Maubourg's cuirassiers, and decide the victory.' The King of Naples immediately placed himself at the head of the cavalry and galloped forward to the scene of the engagement. He made some admirable charges, and decided the partial advantage. Three brigades, commanded by Metzko, were repulsed, and ten thousand men surrendered themselves prisoners. It was a most gallant affair.

"'They have had a rough lesson to begin with,' said the Emperor, as he saw the column of Austrian prisoners file off towards Pyrna. I saw him smile at some remarks made by a wounded

dragoon who was following in the rear of the column, on his way to the *ambulance*. The pain of his wound seemed to be momentarily eased by the pleasure he enjoyed in jeering the Austrians, towards whom our soldiers cherished the bitterest animosity. The lower class of people seem to be endowed with an exquisite instinct for distinguishing right from wrong, justice from injustice. 'Are you not ashamed of yourselves, you *Parpaillots* of Austrians? What unnatural dogs you must be to fight in this manner against your own flesh and blood.' It seemed as though every soldier regarded as his own personal affair the family quarrel which was about to be decided on the field of battle between Napoleon and Austria.

"During the action the Emperor commanded in person a terrific cannonade which was directed on the heights of Rocknitz, where the allied forces were planted in such masses as to preclude the practicability of any other form of attack. It was easy to perceive, from a certain degree of nervous agitation in his manner, that his feelings were painfully ruffled at finding himself thus face to face opposed to the Austrian troops. He turned round to me and said, 'The wicked advisers of the Emperor Francis deserve to be hanged. This is an iniquitous, impious war . . . . How will it all end?'

I could relate many traits of those brave old guards, who were treated with so much indignity after the fall of Napoleon. I, who had the opportunity of being a close observer of the gallant conduct of this corps, must ever be its panegyrist. The humble uniform of every private soldier enveloped a hero, who, though rude in aspect, was endowed with chivalrous loyalty and courage.

The glory of the Roman phalanxes is eclipsed by that of the Imperial guard. History will inscribe that glory in letters of gold when she records the events of Fontainebleau and Waterloo. It is one of the most extraordinary traditions of the empire.

"It was curious to observe the attachment, confidence and familiarity, which existed between the humblest of the soldiers and the most absolute soverign that ever existed. There was not one of Napoleon's intimate friends, however high in rank, who would have ventured to indulge in the sort of *camaraderie* which was kept up between the Emperor and his old *moustaches*. And these same men would not have ventured to speak to one of their lieutenants in the familiar tone in which they addressed the redoubted chief of the army. They regarded Napoleon as a being different from all others, and combining within himself the attributes of sovereign, country, and family. He inspired them with a language which they addressed only to him, and words which they uttered only in his presence. Nothing used to amuse Napoleon so much as this familiarity of the soldiery, and he always replied to them with truly paternal kindness.

"About the middle of the day the rain began to descend with redoubled violence. The Emperor, who had been on horseback since daybreak, was literally soaked to the skin, and an appearance of extreme lassitude was observable in all his movements.

"On the left, in the direction of the Gross-Garten, a battalion of grenadiers of the old guard grouped round a battery, had sustained, since the commencement of the action, the violent assaults of the cavalry of Beningsen. The con-

servation of that battery was exceedingly important. At one moment the enemy's firing appeared to relax, and the Emperor observing this circumstance, spurred his horse, and galloped, amidst the heat of the engagement, between the enemy's cavalry and our artillery. The ground was thickly strewed with the bodies of the slain. 'This position cost us dear,' said he, petulantly; then a moment afterwards, he added, with a look of satisfaction, 'I knew that my guard would not surrender it to the Russians.'

"'Let them come back again at their peril,' exclaimed, with a menacing gesture, an old artilleryman, whose head had just received a sabre wound, and was bandaged up with a handkerchief saturated with blood. Then turning to the Emperor, he said, 'This is not a fit place for you. Go away. You are more ill than any of us; go and take some rest.'

"'I will, when we have won the battle,' said the Emperor.

"'My comrade is right, Sire, said a veteran grenadier. 'Your Majesty is wet to the skin. Pray go and get your clothes changed.' The brave fellow uttered these words in the tone of supplication, which a son might be expected to employ towards a beloved father.

"'I will rest when you can all rest, my lads; that is to say, when the battle is ended.'

"'I know that your Majesty has that battery at heart,' said the grenadier, 'but we will take care that the Russians don't get it. Will we not, comrades?' He was answered by a shout of acquiescence. 'Now, Sire, since we answer for the safety of the battery, surely you may go and take a little rest.'

"'Very well, my good fellows, very well. I trust to you;' and he galloped off, smiling.

"Never did the Emperor execute finer manœuvres or display more surprising presence of mind and activity. He was present at all the points exposed to the greatest danger, frequently facing a shower of grape-shot, like any private soldier. In short, he seemed to become more and more heroic in proportion as difficulties accumulated.

"At the approach of evening we were victorious on all points. Thirty thousand of the enemy's troops *hors de combat*, two hundred pieces of artillery, and a vast quantity of baggage, were the trophies of these two days. Dresden was literally filled with our captures. Our troops performed prodigies during the action. The officers could scarcely restrain the ardor of the men, who, without waiting the word of command, rushed headlong to the attack. Whilst he was looking on, the Emperor several times exclaimed enthusiastically, 'What troops! These are mere raw recruits! It is incredible!' We had not more than a hundred thousand men engaged; the force opposed to us was more than three times as numerous. The enemies' troops were fresh on entering the field; ours, on the contrary, had not had a single day's rest for the space of three months; had frequently been in want of absolute necessaries, and were harassed by the fatigue of forced marches during the few days preceding the battle. Yet they gained the victory by dint of courage and self-sacrifice. Oh, whatever have been our disasters, and the humiliating situation of France, since 1814, yet how many glorious recollections remain to console us!"

Here the Duke de Vicenza paused. When-

ever his memory carried him back to the triumphant days of the empire, his countenance seemed to beam with the light of inspiration; and his brow, though furrowed with care, once more bore the expression of pride and confidence. But these bursts of animation were always succeeded by such profound melancholy, that it was painful to see him. What a sad contrast was presented by the brilliant existence of Napoleon's grand equerry and that of the poor invalid seated in a humble apartment at Plombières, and whilst relating the marvels of the Emperor's reign, striving to conceal the active part he himself had played in the great history.

"We did not return to the Palace of Dresden till eleven o'clock," resumed the Duke. "The Emperor was so wet that the water dripped from his clothes. He was taken ill in the night with a sort of ague fit; yet when I entered his apartment at four in the morning, I found him up and ready to mount his horse. 'The work is not ended yet,' said he, 'we must follow the enemy in his retreat, and drive him completely from the environs of Dresden. The King of Naples and Victor will pursue him on the Sayda road; Marmont, on Altemberg; Saint Cyr, on Dohna; and Mortier, with the young guard, on the high road of Pyrna. It is always the same thing over again,' he added, with a sigh. 'Gentlemen, let us to the camp.'

"We went down to the court-yard of the Palace. Day was just beginning to dawn. When the Emperor saw the squadron on duty, drawn up in the court-yard, he could not repress an exclamation of surprise. The squadron was composed of the same grenadiers of the old guard, who, on the preceding day, had served as the

Emperor's escort, and who had returned with us to Dresden, soaked through with rain. To see them again at five in the morning in smart uniforms, presenting arms, and looking as trim as if they had been on parade at the Tuileries, seemed like the work of magic.

"'Why, my lads, you must have spent the night in equipping yourselves, instead of taking your rest,' said the Emperor, in a tone of kind reproach.

"'Rest!—we have not had much of that,' replied one of the men. 'But no matter! We have had as much as your Majesty!'

"'I am accustomed to go without rest.' He cast his eye on a gruff-looking quarter-master, and recognising his countenanee, he said—

"'You served in Egypt, I think?'

"'I am proud to say I did. I was at Aboukir; and I remember it was hot enough there.'

"'You have no decoration, I perceive.'

"'It will come some time or other,' said the quarter-master, somewhat sullenly.

"'It has come,' said the Emperor. 'I give you the cross.'

"The poor fellow was quite overcome by joy and gratitude. He fixed on the Emperor a look which it is impossible to describe, and the tears overflowed his eyes. 'I shall lay down my life for your Majesty to-day, that is certain,' said he. In his transport he seized the skirt of the Emperor's famous grey great-coat, and putting it into his mouth, bit off a fragment, which he placed in his button-hole.

"'This will do till I get the red riband, please your Majesty.'

"The Emperor was deeply moved by this incident. He spurred his horse and galloped off,

his escort following and raising shouts of joy. The King of Saxony, who was a witness of this scene, sent that same evening twenty gold Napoleons to the quarter-master, with a message, informing him that the money was 'to purchase a red riband.'

"You will; I doubt not," said the Duke de Vicenza, "readily believe me, when I say that even now, after the lapse of thirteen years, my heart glows at the remembrance of these incidents. They were, indeed, of such common occurrence, that we ceased to wonder at the fervent adulation paid by the soldiery to Napoleon. I retain a pious recollection of it, and it serves to counteract in my mind the pain excited by the vile apostacies I have witnessed.

"Even since the fall of the Emperor, I have occasionally met with curious examples of the veneration in which he was held. Last year, for instance, when I was proceeding to my country seat, I stopped to change horses at a little village beyond Alençon. Whilst the new postilion was assisting to harness the horses, I observed him gazing at me with marked attention. I could not account for the man's curiosity. At length he bestrode his horse, and with several tremendous smacks of his whip, drove off at a furious gallop. I expected every moment to be overturned; and, moreover, being an invalid, I felt incommoded by the excessive speed. I called to him to slacken his pace, and, pulling up his horses, he turned round and made me a military salute, saying, 'General, you see I know you!'

"You know me! Well! and is that the reason why you wish to break my neck?

"'On the contrary, General, I wish to do you

honor, in memory of ——. You know who I mean! Were you not his most intimate friend, and always with him?'

"What do you mean? I do not understand you?

"'Well, then, general, I mean the Emperor! That name will not offend your ears! I served in the guides. *Mille Tounerres!* Those were glorious days, general!—glorious days!'

"On arriving at the next relay, I offered the poor fellow some money, but he declined to accept it.

"'General,' said he, 'I have a little favor to request of you, and, if you will grant it, it will make me richer than the present you offer.—Can you spare a quarter of an hour to honor me with a visit in my humble abode, which is hard by. There is a report that *he* is dead; but I cannot believe it. I drink his health every day.'

"I was so amused with the man's blunt simplicity of manner, that I accepted this strange invitation; and, having alighted from the calache, I followed the old Imperial *guide* to his dwelling-place. There I drank half a glass of very sour wine, which, however, did not do me any harm. I admired some wretchedly daubed colored drawings, representing Napoleon on foot and on horseback; and a sort of caricature of the King of Rome, dressed in the uniform of a grenadier of the guard. At the bottom of this picture were written, in pencil, the words *il grandira.* I was next shown several eagles, and a silver cross, with an image of Napoleon. These things were taken out of a press, where they had been deposited along with some old uniform coats, carefully folded up. The soldier, as he showed me these

relics, said, with emotion, 'I would not part with them for worlds. I worship them as though they were sacred. And I have preferred turning to the vile business of *trottemenu* (postilion), rather than I would serve any other sovereign. Such is my way of thinking; I know it differs from that of many others.'

"You perceive," said the duke, "that I cannot cure myself of the habit of relating without order, or connection, all that comes into my head. We were, I think, at Dresden, and on the blood-stained field of battle.

"We were once more victorious, and this victory was destined to be the last ray of the star which lighted the fortune of Napoleon. The rest of the campaign was a succession of misfortunes, aggravated by the basest treason. Every feeling held sacred by mankind, was then turned to scoff and derision. Military capitulations and treaties of alliance were openly violated, and physical force superseded the law of nations. All was set at defiance; even the judgment which history will pronounce on such deeds. Sovereigns did not then appear to understand that, by demoralising their subjects, they were creating to themselves incessant sources of torment. Not even kings can set bad examples with impunity.

"But it was not enough to forsake the Emperor, or to maintain a base and dishonorable neutrality; our allies waited till they were on the field of battle to desert from our ranks. Thus we saw the Saxons, at Leipsic, turn their arms against those Frenchmen with whom but a few minutes previously, they had had the honor to share glory and danger. But the time will come when party spirit shall give place to justice, and

then the historian will scarcely find words sufficiently severe to qualify such turpitude. The anathemas uttered by the victims on the field of Leipsic, will be re-echoed by the voice of posterity."

CHAPTER XI.

Vandamme made prisoner, and his corps cut to pieces—Marshal St. Cyr left in command of Dresden—The King and Queen of Saxony, and Princess Augusta—Napoleon's address to the Saxon troops—The Duke de Bassano—The Emperor signifies his intention of marching on Berlin—Dissatisfaction occasioned by that announcement—Napoleon urged to march on Leipsic—His reply—His grief and dejection—He reluctantly consents to march on Leipsic—Augereau's opinion of this movement—Arrival at Leipsic—The Austrian General Meerfeldt—Napoleon sends him on a mission to the Emperor Francis—Napoleon's anxiety—Attack of the combined allied forces—Desertion of the Saxon and Wurtemburgh troops—The eagle rescued—Death of Poniatowski—The Emperor takes farewell of the royal family of Saxony—Treachery of Murat—General Wrede—The French cross the Rhine.

"We left Dresden on the 7th of October. We had already heard of the defection of a Westphalian regiment, which went over to the enemy with arms and baggage. General Vandamme, too, led away by his natural impetuosity, had transgressed the orders transmitted to him by the Emperor through General Haxo. Vandamme had been surrounded on all sides, and overpowered by numbers; his ten thousand men had been cut to pieces, and himself made prisoner, at the very moment when we so dearly earned the victory of Dresden.

"On hearing this sad news, the Emperor said: 'Surely some fatality hangs over us. This unfortunate event takes from us a valuable resource. There is no excuse for the disobedience of Vandamme. My orders were precise. He ought to

have known, that against a retreating enemy one must raise a bridge of gold or a barrier of steel,'

"Marshal Saint Cyr remained in Dresden with thirty thousand men. The King of Saxony insisted on accompanying the Emperor. He entered the carriage together with the Queen and the Princess Augusta. The party was escorted by the Imperial staff. At Eilenburgh, on the banks of the Mulda, the Saxon troops rejoined the French Army, and were reviewed by the Emperor and the King of Saxony. I read and translated to the Saxon troops the proclamation addressed to them by the Emperor. In this proclamation, Napoleon exhorted the Saxons to second the efforts he was making to maintain the independence of their country. He called their attention to the example of fidelity set by their sovereign, his dear and honored ally; and reminded them that Prussia was threatening Saxony, and seeking to invade her finest provinces. Then, appealing to them in the name of military honor, he conjured them to emulate the valiant soldiers of the grand army, with whom the Saxons had made common cause, and in whose ranks they were about to fight.

"Shouts of enthusiasm followed this address. All swore to remain faithful until death. Some officers stepped forward, sword in hand, and, surrounding the two sovereigns, exclaimed—"Vive notre Roi! Vive l'Empereur Napoleon, the friend of the Saxons!'

"Our troops, who had been dispirited by so many successive defections, now felt their confidence revive. On that foreign land they had found friends and companions in arms. They shook hands, embraced, and shared their wine and provisions together. French cordiality soon

thawed the ice of German reserve. Within an hour after the review, the troops seemed to be united by the bonds of fraternity. A month later, all these feelings were obliterated.

"We left at Eilenburgh the King of Saxony, his family, and the Duke de Bassano. The latter was invested with the most extended powers, and the Emperor's confidence was never more worthily bestowed. With high talent the Duke de Bassano combines every honorable quality. He is one of those men whose characters shed lustre on the empire. After the fall of Napoleon, the honor of General Maret was unsullied by any act of meanness or ingratitude.

"Eilenburgh became the depot of the great park of artillery and all the baggage wagons. We took the direction of Duben. The plans on which the Emperor had been deliberating were then made known. At length it was understood that he intended to march on Berlin, and not on Leipsic.

"When the Emperor's purpose became known, there was an almost general explosion of dissatisfaction. Blind obedience was suddenly superseded by rebellion. 'Must we, then,' it was said, 'expose ourselves to another failure in Prussia? Is the wreck of our army to be buried in Berlin? Has there not been blood enough spilt? Is this never to end? It is too late to enter upon this hazardous campaign. Having gained our position on the Rhine, we will keep possession of our winter quarters; and in the spring of the year (if it must needs be so) we will enter the field again.'

"These complaints were uttered aloud and without any sort of reserve. When the Emperor spoke of his plans, and explained the

chances of success offered to us by the improvidence of Blucher, he found himself surrounded by cold looks, and not an approving word seconded the generous enterprize. Whilst these feelings of doubt and dissatisfaction prevailed amongst the principal commanders of the army, intelligence arrived of the defection of Bavaria. Then the spirit of discontent knew no bounds, and for the first time the Emperor heard remonstrances.

"There was something very odious in an insurrection thus excited solely by unmerited misfortune. Was not Napoleon still Emperor of France? Was he not still the able chief who had so often led us to victory? Scarcely a day had elapsed since his will was law! Yet now, the sublime conceptions of his genius were met by a frantic cry of disapproval. 'We have had enough of fighting. We want to go back to France!' were words echoed from mouth to mouth. Alas! how severely have subsequent events chastised this baseness!

"I was in the Emperor's saloon when the officers of his staff came to implore him to abandon his design on Berlin and to march to Leipsic. It was a most distressing scene. None but those who knew the Emperor as I knew him can form any notion of what he must have suffered at that moment. The subject was opened by a marshal of France. I will not name him. His existence has since been poisoned by bitter regret! After he had spoken, several others delivered their opinions; and, as it often happens in similar cases, the person who spoke loudest and with most vehemence, whether right or wrong, converted to his way of thinking all who had differed from him. It is possible that, before the interview

with the Emperor, strong arguments and effective remonstrances might have been prepared; but in the presence of him, whose look of displeasure was not easily braved, no one had courage to deliver the speeches previously prepared, and such feeble arguments were advanced as ill justified the bold step that had been taken.

"Whilst the Emperor's blood boiled, and his eyes flashed with indignation, his insulted pride armed him with strength to restrain the expression of his resentment. He maintained a dignified coolness; but a slight tremor was observable in his voice, when he made the following reply: 'I have maturely reflected on my plan; and have weighed the defection of Bavaria in the balance of circumstances adverse to our interests. I am convinced of the advantage of marching on Berlin. A retrogade movement, in the circumstances in which we are placed, would be attended by disastrous consequences; and those who oppose my plan are taking upon themselves a fearful responsibility. I will consider of what you have said, gentlemen.' He then retired into his cabinet.

"In the course of the day I several times went to the Emperor's door. He was alone in the cabinet, with nothing to occupy him but his own thoughts. This solitude and the absence of occupation, which was so much at variance with his usual active habits, rendered me uneasy, and in the evening I directed a servant to tap at the door and to request that the Emperor would admit me. He made no reply. I was awaiting his answer in the saloon adjoining his cabinet. It was a cold and dark night; the wind howled through the corridors of the gloomy castle of Duben, and shook the windows, which were fixed in curious old leaden frames. An air of porten-

tous melancholy prevailed around. Every one had tacitly absolved himself from the oath of allegiance. The sovereign had said—'I will reflect,' and his rebellious subjects, having given their ultimatum, took no pains to conceal their indifference as to the veto which might be affixed to it.

"The incidents of this eventful drama were now hurrying on with a degree of rapidity which exceeded even my worst forebodings. The *denouement*, which at first appeared doubtful and obscure, now developed itself with frightful certainty.

"Alas! thought I, we shall mark by a long track of blood the path we have yet to traverse; and the abyss which is to swallow us up will be our last halting-place!

"Night advanced, and the same silence prevailed in the Emperor's cabinet. I tore a leaf from my memorandum book, and with my pencil wrote these words—'I am here; will your Majesty be pleased to see me?' I summoned an usher, and gave him positive orders to enter the Emperor's apartment, and to give him the slip of paper. I approached the door of the cabinet, which now stood ajar. The Emperor read what I had written. A faint smile lighted up his dejected countenance, and he said—'Come in, Caulincourt.'

"I found him lying on a sofa, beside which stood a little table covered with maps and papers. But it was evident he had not been perusing them. His eyes were dim and fixed, and the sardonic expression of his mouth betrayed the bitter reflections which had occupied his mind. His hands were convulsively agitated, and he took up and threw down, unconsciously, any ob-

ject that happened to lie within his reach. His aspect altogether denoted that he was suffering under deep and absorbing affliction.

"I approached him and said—'Sire, this state of mind will kill you.'

"He made no reply; but an impatient gesture revealed this thought, and seemed to say—'It matters not.'

"'Sire,' returned I, 'the representations which have been made to you are submitted to your Majesty's approbation.'

"He fixed his eyes on me and said—'You are not under the delusion, Caulincourt; no, it cannot be. You must be aware of the fatal results of this spirit of insubordination which is every day showing itself. It must be followed by fearful and incalculable consequences. When bayonets deliberate, power escapes from the sceptre of the sovereign. I see growing up around me a power of inertness, more dangerous than positive revolt. A hundred generals in open insurrection could not embarrass me. My troops would put down the fiercest rebellion. They do not argue, they obey, and are willing to follow me to the furthest extremity of the world. But in the critical circumstances in which we are at present placed, it is a question of life or death to the country that a good understanding should exist between the leaders of the army and myself. Distrust and hesitation will bring about our destruction more speedily than the swords of the allies.'

"He rose from the sofa, and paced two or three times up and down his cabinet. Then he said, as if speaking to himself—'All is lost! I am vainly contending against Fate! The French people know not how to bear reverses!' He

again threw himself on the sofa, and fell into his reverie. All my efforts to rouse him were unavailing. His faculties seemed to be suspended, and his genius disarmed, by the listlessness of those in whose co-operation he confided. This miserable apathy was demoralising the army and extinguishing that sacred flame of patriotism which had wrought so many miracles. And what but a miracle could now defend France from the invasion of the five powers combined against her?

"Throughout the following day the Emperor's mind was racked by anguish and indecision. In making the sacrifice of his personal conviction he seemed to feel that he was annihilating, by a single blow, all his fortune. His presentiments were but too fully realised. At length, towards evening, he came to a decision. He then became apparently calm, as he always did when he had made up his mind to anything. I shall never forget his prophetic words:—'Fate marks the fall of nations.'

"'But, Sire, observed I, 'the will of a people may counterbalance the decree of Fate.'

"'Yes,' replied he, laying his hand on my arm; 'but that will has not been shown. Bear this in mind, Caulincourt! Let not the French invoke maledictions on my memory.'

"The Emperor announced his determination to march on Leipsic. 'May they who have urged this movement not have reason to repent it,' added he. Orders for departure were immediately given; and, as if the triumph over the Emperor's wish had satisfied all the exigencies of our ill-fortune, the bulk of the army manifested the most boundless joy. It was a melancholy spectacle to those who did not share this

almost general feeling of gratification. The Emperor, in yielding, had been overcome by one of those necessities against which the most energetic resistance cannot hold out.

"Augereau arrived at head-quarters, bringing with him the twenty thousand men of his division. Augereau, with his excellent good sense and discernment, foresaw the fatal consequences of our retrogade movement. 'This,' said he to me, 'appears like madness. All eyes are now directed to one point, which is France. Do they not perceive that defection has echelloned along our route enemies the more formidable, inasmuch as they know the strong and the weak side of our resources. The emperor was wrong to yield to this clamor, and I told him so not an hour ago. He should have turned adrift all these fellows who are so anxious to get home, and should have marched forward with the well-disposed part of the army. We had none of this in '93. There was no clamoring then. Every man carried his fortune at the end of his musket, and never turned to look behind him. Had I been in the Emperor's place, I would have sent one-half of them back to France to plant their cabbages.'

"The marshal, in his soldier-like honesty, could not conceive the idea of men betraying their duty; but he saw only one side of our disasters. Misfortune had come accompanied by every base feeling. At the close of 1813, France was not a place to which the discontented could be sent with safety. Whilst her heroic sons had been shedding their blood on the field of battle, vile conspirators had been secretly forging chains to bind their mutilated limbs. Woe to those who rewarded such heroism by such ingratitude!

"On the morning of the 15th of October, the Emperor left Duben, and he reached Leipsic early in the day. He immediately began to trace his plans. The abrupt and impatient manner in which he issued his commands denoted his disturbed state of mind. Our numerical force was frightfully disproportionate to that of the enemy, and it was evident that this battle must be decisive! Whilst pointing out to me on the map the plan he had traced out, the Emperor said—'There are no scientific combinations which can compensate on this point for the thinness of our squares. We shall be overpowered by mere numbers. One hundred and twenty-five thousand men against three hundred and fifty thousand, and this in a pitched battle! Well! they would have it thus!' This phrase, which he repeated for the second time in a tone of despair, rang in my ears like a sentence of death.

"The flower of the French army was buried on the field of Leipsic. There, as everywhere, our officers and troops earned imperishable laurels. I was with the Emperor when the Austrian General, Meerfeld, was conducted to his presence. The General had been defeated and repulsed, with all his division, at Dælitz, by the Poles and the old guard. Meerfeld, now our prisoner, had formerly been one of the negotiators of Campo Formio. At Austerlitz, too, he had been the bearer of the first proposition for an armistice. Napoleon, who, contrary to all evidence, still cherished hope of the success of new overtures to Austria, sent Meerfeld on a mission to the Emperor Francis. The General was instructed to urge on the attention of his Majesty such considerations as were calculated to convince him that the policy he was pursuing threatened the

destruction of his daughter and grandson. He demanded an armistice on reasonable conditions. 'Depart,' said Napoleon to General Meerfeld, 'on your honorable mission of peace-maker. Should your efforts be crowned with success, you will secure the affection and gratitude of a great nation. The French people, as well as myself, earnestly wish for peace; if it be refused, we will defend the inviolability of our territory to the last drop of our blood. The French have already shown that they know how to defend their country against foreign invaders.' Meerfeld left the French camp, and never returned.

"I was at a loss to comprehend how this fixed idea could have got possession of the superior mind of Napoleon. To the very last moment he labored under a delusion with respect to Austria.

"On the night of the 17th, the Emperor was in a painful state of agitation, and anxiously looking for General Meerfeld, who, however, was destined not to return. Every movement in the camp annoyed him; his anxiety increased every moment; his features were contracted, and his countenance lividly pale. He threw himself into an easy chair, which stood at the further end of the tent. 'I feel very ill,' said he, laying his hand on his stomach; 'my mind bears up, but my body sinks.'

"I will send for Ivan,' exclaimed I, hurrying towards the door.

"No, Caulincourt, I desire that you do not. The tent of a sovereign is as transparent as glass. I must be up to see that every one is at his post.'

"Sire, said I, taking his burning hands in

mine, I implore you to lie down and take some rest. Lie down, I entreat you.

" 'I cannot—it is impossible—I must be up.'

" Permit me, Sire, to send for Ivan.

" 'No, no—a sick soldier would receive an hospital order; but I—I cannot share the indulgence that would be granted to the poor soldier.' As he uttered these words he heaved a deep sigh, and his head sunk languidly on his bosom.

" This scene," pursued the duke, " will never be effaced from my memory. The recollection of it inspired me with courage at the time when all was irreparably lost! At that terrible moment, when energy was nearly exhausted, when resolution was on the point of yielding in the struggle with despondency, then I thought of Napoleon on the night of the 17th of October. How trivial my own sufferings appeared in comparison with those of the noble victim.

" I approached the Emperor. He took my hand, and, pressing it feebly, he said, 'It is nothing—I shall soon be better. Take care that no one enters.'

" I was in an agony of alarm and apprehension at seeing the Emperor in this sad condition. The enemy was pressing us on all sides. The fate of the thousands who were on the field of battle hung on the fate of Napoleon. I offered up to Heaven one of those tacit prayers to which no language can give adequate expression.

" After a little interval, the Emperor, though still breathing with difficulty, said, 'I feel somewhat better, my dear Caulincourt.' He took my arm and walked two or three times slowly up down the tent. His countenance gradually resumed its wonted animation. Half an hour after this serious fit of illness, the Emperor was sur-

rounded by his staff, and was giving orders and despatching messages to the different commanders of corps. He sent the Prince de Neufchatel to Randnitz, where the reserve of his guard was subsequently to support Ney. Day was beginning to dawn, and the carnage was about to recommence.

"'This day, said the Emperor, as he mounted his horse, 'this day will resolve a great question. The destiny of France is about to be decided on the field of Leipsic. Should we be victorious, all our misfortunes may yet be repaired; should we be conquered, it is impossible to foresee what may be the consequences of our defeat.' All the officers of the escort might have heard these words.

"About noon we were attacked on all points by the whole combined forces of the allies. Our army, reduced to less than a hundred thousand men, had now to oppose a force of three hundred and fifty thousand, concentrated *en masse* in a semi-circle of from three to four leagues in extent, and with twelve hundred pieces of cannon. Thus the enemy had constantly fresh troops in reserve to fill up the gaps caused by our artillery.

"Throughout that fatal day every hour was marked by a new misfortune—a new loss. The deaths of Generals Vial and Rochambeau were successively announced. The fog, the smoke, and the tumult of the *melée*, scarcely permitted us to recognise each other. We found it very difficult to follow the Emperor. We repeatedly lost sight of him. He was continually moving from place to place, braving the greatest dangers, and disdaining life without victory.

"Hitherto the conflict had been maintained with various chances on both sides. An aide-

de-camp of General Regnier arrived. He brought intelligence that the Saxon army and the Wurtemberg cavalry, under General Normann—that is to say, twelve thousand men and forty pieces of artillery, had gone over to Bernadotte. The latter had ordered the commander of the Saxon artillery to turn his guns and fire on the French. For some moments the Emperor sat on his horse as motionless as a statue. He raised his eyes as if appealing to the justice of Heaven. 'Infamous!' he exclaimed. The word was repeated by a thousand voices. Imprecations and expressions of rage resounded on all sides. Several Saxon officers, who remained faithful to us, broke their swords, and overcome by shame for the baseness of their countrymen, retired to the rear of the army. 'No matter,' said a dragoon of the escort; 'we can do without the cowardly dogs. Your Majesty has still your French army to count upon!' He darted with the rapidity of lightning into the midst of the *melée*. Shouts of *Vive l'Empereur! Mort aux Saxons!* were echoed from mouth to mouth. All the escort followed the dragoon. The officers alone remained at their post near the Emperor.

"A few minutes afterwards a young officer of hussars, whose name I forget, rushed headlong into the enemy's ranks. In a charge some of the miserable renegades had carried off one of our eagles. The gallant young officer rescued it, but it was at the cost of his life. He threw it at the Emperor's feet, and then he himself fell, mortally wounded, and bathed in his blood. The Emperor was deeply moved by this incident: 'With such men,' said he, 'what resources does France possess!'

"But valor and courage could not overcome

destiny. Our ammunition was exhausted before our blood. For the first time, we retired from the field of battle without having conquered; and we commenced that fatal retreat, in which the unfortunate men who had escaped death in the conflict, found their graves in the waters of the Elster. Thus perished Poniatowski, the idol of the brave and devoted Poles.

"On the morning of the 19th, the Emperor proceeded to the palace of the King of Saxony. The sovereigns took an affectionate leave of each other. The King was inconsolable for the conduct of the Saxon army; the blush of shame overspread his venerable forehead. The Queen and the Princess Augusta offered the Emperor every assurance of their friendly feeling: they were alarmed at the dangers to which he was exposed, and, with uplifted hands and eyes streaming with tears, they supplicated him to depart. The King of Saxony threw himself into Napoleon's arms, calling him his son and his friend, and the Emperor tore himself from the embraces of this excellent family, whose conduct presented a consolatory picture amidst the many examples of royal turpitude!

"Murat separated from the Emperor at Erfurt, under the pretext that his presence at Naples was indispensable for the defence of his kingdom. At the advanced posts, on the 22d of October, he had stipulated conventions with Austria and England. I will not add a word to this fact. Murat expiated his crime by a terrible death: I respect his misfortune.

"Every day of our retreat was marked by a new engagement. We were doomed to reach France only by marching over the bleeding corses of our countrymen. At Hanau, the Im-

perial guard, the precious wreck of our valiant grand army, gained a victory over the combined Bavarian forces, commanded by General Wrede. This man, too, had earned all the distinction he was possessed of by serving for the space of ten years under the French flag. The Emperor had conferred many favors on Wrede.

"On the 2d of November we entered Mentz, and all our troops crossed the Rhine. The Emperor then determined to proceed to St. Cloud, Only six months had elapsed since we quitted that residence, and in that short space of time we had lost all—even hope!"

CHAPTER XII.

Illness of the Duke de Vicenza—The empire at the close of 1813—Napoleon's return to Paris—The Royalist lady—Her description of the state of parties in Paris—Death of Count Louis de Narbonne—His character—His *bonnes-fortunes*—Narbonne in his tent—A dandy of the old school—Caulincourt appointed minister of foreign affairs—The Congress of Manheim—Remarks on some peculiarities in Napoleon's character—The Duke's departure for Manheim—Negotiations at the Congress—The declaration of Frankfort—Rupture of the conferences at Manhiem—the Duke's return to Paris—Conversation with Napoleon.

SEVERAL days elapsed before we had an opportunity of renewing our conversation with the Duke de Vicenza, who was so ill as to be compelled to keep his room. We visited him regularly; but the restorative which I had formerly employed with success was now no longer at my command. The pleasing recollections of Russia were exhausted, and I was, of course, anxious to divert the mind of the invalid from painful reminiscences.

But that knowledge of the heart, that exquisite tact with which the Duke de Vicenza was so eminently gifted, enabled him to discern the motives of my reserve.

Holding out his hand to me, he said, in a tone of kindness, "I observe that your questions have ceased, yet I feel assured that your curiosity is not gratified. But I see how it is: you check your curiosity from feelings of consideration towards me. You are reluctant to call back my

memory to a period to which I cannot revert without pain; yet that period is almost constantly present in my thoughts. Profit, therefore, I entreat you, by the faint spark of life which yet animates me, and which will ere long be extinct."

"Oh! duke!" I exclaimed, "I entertain no such gloomy anticipations. On our return to Paris I trust we shall frequently have the happiness of enjoying your society; then your health will be improved, and I shall not hesitate to put your goodness under contribution."

"Now or never," said he sorrowfully. "I feel that my life is fast ebbing away. To me the future has no promise. Grant me but a few days, and then we will resume our favorite subject."

"Well!" replied I, with difficulty restraining my tears, "we shall remain at Plombières until you depart. If you continue ill, our services are at your command, and if you get better, we will take advantage of every fine day to renew our walks and conversations."

In mountainous districts the autumn is short. Plombières, which had been so gay and so full of company on my arrival, was now almost deserted. The birds of passage, who had gone thither in quest of health or pleasure, were rapidly taking flight. The season for the waters was past, and we were almost the only visitors remaining in Plombières; yet how gladly would I have continued there the whole winter through, to hear the Duke de Vicenza describe the stirring events of the empire. There were yet many incidents in the career of Napoleon which I wished to hear authentically related. The last acts of the great drama were of recent occurrence, and yet I knew them but superficially.

I was, above all, curious to be made acquainted

with that striking period in the Emperor's reign, the close of the year 1813, when intrigue and treason were hatched under the very eyes of the sovereign, and in the bosom of the capital. Who so well qualified as the Minister for Foreign Affairs to furnish me with a key to the odious machinations which so powerfully contributed to overthrow the Imperial government?

I wished to accompany the faithful equerry of Napoleon to that sacred apartment at Fontainbleau, to which the duke was one among the few admitted. I wished to follow him to the Palace of the Tuileries, where, during the Hundred Days, the brilliant hopes with which national enthusiasm had inspired the intrepid deserter from Elba vanished like a dream—I wished to hear the duke describe the dramatic scenes of Malmaison —that fairy palace, whose gilded saloons and perfumed gardens, once the abode of taste and happiness, became in 1813 the temporary jail of the condemned sovereign.

The duke's health gradually improved, and, after a little time, we resumed our morning excursions and our evening conversations.

"Do you recollect at what point I stopped?" said he.

"Perfectly," replied I. "You had brought the Emperor from Mentz to St. Cloud."

"Well," pursued the duke, "I left him there and returned to Paris. I cannot describe the sort of boyish pleasure I felt at once more finding myself at home. To have an apartment to myself, and to lie on a bed, appeared to me the highest of all possible luxuries. Even now I cannot refrain from smiling when I think of the perfect contentment I enjoyed on the first night of my arrival. When I stretched myself on my

bed, instead of falling asleep I contemplated by the light of the fire the interior of my chamber, which appeared to me a most magnificent place in comparison with the huts and hovels in which I had slept during the preceding six months.

"What had wrought this change in my ideas? Why did I feel thus joyful at my return? Had I not been present at every battle that had been fought for the space of fifteen years? Had I not slept at the bivouac, and endured every physical privation? But then, we were all light at heart and gay in spirit, and we readily forgot our sufferings and fatigues in the glory of the conquest, the pride of the victory.

"This last campaign, on the contrary, had been throughout gloomy and discouraging; there had been nothing to mitigate the misery which inevitably follows in the train of war. For the first time I enjoyed happiness unalloyed by that sort of mental torture which the Emperor so well defined when he exclaimed—*Phis un jour de repos!* What would I not have given to have been free to go and pass the winter fifty leagues from Paris, to escape the torments of every kind which I saw crowding upon me, and which were the unavoidable consequences of my political position.

"My first visit on my arrival in Paris was to an old female relative of mine, Madame de ——. She was an excellent woman, but an obstinate and uncompromising adherent of the Bourbons. In spite of her numerous absurdities, Madame de —— was animated by that pure and disinterested spirit of loyalty which never bends to circumstances. The Emperor in the zenith of his glory was never, in her eyes, anything more than a fortunate adventurer, to whom, to her great

regret, she saw me devoted, heart and soul. How often, in our disputes on this subject, have I smiled at her eternal remark—'Well, well, we shall see what will be the end of all this!' The *commencement* of the long predicted *end* had now arrived.

"I usually paid my visits to Madame de —— in the morning. She made an exception in my favor, but received me at what she termed her *petit lever*. Her circle of friends, consisting exclusively of *frondeurs* hostile to the empire, were of course not very agreeable to me, and I avoided coming into contact with them.

"Madame de —— uttered an exclamation of joy when she beheld me. 'Ah! my dear Armand,' she said, 'how happy I am to see you at home again! How have you managed to escape the many dangers you have been exposed to? But few have returned to tell the tale of horror. What news do you bring?'

"None! you would not weep to hear it; and therefore I will not tell you my news.

"'Ah! my dear Armand, I can guess the riddle. Your enchanter has lost his wand, and the ludicrous metamorphoses he wrought are at an end. Of all the sovereignshe created nothing now remains but the shadow of an Emperor; and I know one who has vowed to rid us of even that shadow.'

"My dear madame! do not speak thus, I entreat you. You have no idea how much you grieve me.

"'What! are you still under the influence of the sorcerer's spell? Have you not had enough of this imperial foolery? But, to be serious, my dear duke, do you not know what is going on?'

"No, said I, eagerly. I arrived only yesterday evening from the army.

"'Then you do not know that the empire, as you are pleased to call it, is rapidly tottering down—that all the powers of Europe have entered into a compact ——

"What! interrupted I.

"'Have entered into a compact not to lay down arms until they have razed from the list of sovereigns this great Usurper, who, for the space of fourteen years, has been playing a game with all the crowns in Europe. A distinguished individual (whose name I need not mention), who is too sharp-witted ever to be taken by surprise, has already made overtures to the Allied Powers, and taken precautions for every possible event that may ensue. If I were not afraid you would accuse me of slander, I should say that he has already sold the lion's skin for a good price. Others, too, have followed his example, and have taken active measures for making their peace with the rightful power. The revolution is imminent, yet a little while, and there will be but *one man less* in France, whilst tranquillity will be restored in Europe. Now do you understand?'

"Do you imagine,' said I, that because a few miserable traitors are plotting the Emperor's ruin, that that ruin is certain. The army is devoted to its chief, and its fidelity is incorruptible. There exists in the mass of the people an ardent sympathy with Napoleon; and among the higher ranks so many persons are compromised in his cause, whilst so many others have their existence attached to his fortune, that their interests are blended with his. Some will be actuated by honor, and others by affection, to support the man

who has raised them from nothing; and their efforts will neutralise the base intrigues of those who would deliver France up to the power of foreigners.'

"'My dear duke, where have you come from? Your romantic notions will make you the laughing-stock of all Paris. Sympathy, fidelity, honor, and all those fine things, merely belong to the traditions of by-gone days: the revolution of '92 exploded all those notions. Formerly, honor consisted in the religious observance of an oath, in the fulfilment of the most sacred of duties, in fidelity to one's sovereign. If that sovereign were unfortunate, the greater were his claims to sacrifices and respect. But the good old times of Henri IV are past, never to return. Who cares now for an unfortunate king? Now-a-days, my dear Armand, honor consists in preserving one's rank, one's fortune, no matter by what means, even though it should be by walking over the body of him to whom we owe that rank and fortune. Alas! we live in a very wicked world.'

"These words conveyed a horrible truth:—they were a revelation of the misfortunes of the future. I remained silent, overwhelmed by gloomy reflections.

"'In a word, my dear duke,' pursued Madame de ——, 'your hero has descended from his pedestal. He has been conquered, and that is a crime which the world never pardons. Were you to visit, this very night, twenty of the best drawing-rooms in Paris, you would find the condemnation of Napoleon written in every face and uttered by every mouth. Those who have solicited Imperial favors may be distinguished by the fury of their attacks and the bitterness of their language. Truly! one would suppose the poor

Emperor to be responsible for all the meanness to which they resorted, to gain admittance to his service. Then there are the newly-made Nobles, the Senators, with their endowments of a hundred thousand francs, the *parvenu* duchesses, countesses, baronesses, &c. All these people imagined that their greatness was to last forever, and they cannot endure the thought of descending again to their proper level. The possibility of this metamorphosis drives them mad. There is a host of people here in Paris who owe everything to your Napoleon, and who are the loudest in abusing him for his ambition, and for staking their places and dignities on the result of the battle. Really, this ingratitude is disgusting! Even the very valets in the ante-chambers look with contempt on their masters! However, happen what may, my dear Armand, I would rather see you in the class of dupes than in that of traitors!'

"I took leave of Madame de ——, racked by the most painful feelings. I beheld with horror the abyss which was yawning before us. We were manœuvring over a volcano. Public opinion was rising against the Emperor. Opposed to that formidable power, the wisest combinations must fail. The ruin of France was evident from this simple fact.

"In the evening I made some visits to persons attached to the Court. Though no one ventured, in my presence, to express feelings of hostility to the Emperor, yet I could discern, through the air of reserve and the polite restraint which pervaded the conversation in reference to political events, that discontent and opposition were the uppermost feelings in every mind. Madame de —— had given me a true picture of the state of affairs. Of this I was fully convinced, when

I observed the moral physiognomy of the saloons of Paris, at the end of the year 1813.

"I returned home, weary and disgusted at the utter want of principle manifested in what are called the higher ranks; and I almost looked back with regret on my camp life. There every hardship and privation was counterbalanced by the consolation of witnessing acts of heroism and noble disinterestedness, by being surrounded by generous spirits, who would willingly have made any sacrifice to serve a sovereign from whom, possibly, they had received no personal favors.

"The melancholy picture of human nature which I now beheld around me, produced a depression of spirits which speedily affected my health.

"Circumstances did not permit me to live entirely in seclusion, but I restricted my circle of association as much as possible, and with the exception of a few friends with whom I could, as it were, think aloud, I maintained no intercourse with society.

"The intelligence of the death of Count Louis de Narbonne," pursued the Duke de Vicenza, "came upon me like a thunderbolt. The event took place at Torgan, on the 17th of November. After the Count's embassy to Vienna, the Emperor had appointed him Governor of the fortress of Torgan. His death was caused by a fall from his horse. I never understood the reasons which prompted the strange nomination of Narbonne to the command of a fortress. The Emperor never gave me any explanation on this point, but it is certain that the Emperor's mind fostered an unjust prejudice, to which he yielded without being willing to avow it. During the latter period of his embassy to Vienna, Narbonne found himself

placed quite in a false position. The Emperor observed that Narbonne was born to be an ambassador. So he was: but what availed all his skill and finesse when opposed to the determined resolution not to accede to any proposition made by France? Ill fortune sometimes renders men unjust; and this was the Emperor's case in reference to Narbonne. Napoleon was dissatisfied with his ambassador because he had not succeeded in enforcing his propositions. I am the more inclined to believe that this was the ground of the Emperor's unfavorable feeling towards Narbonne, judging from the luke-warm reception he gave me on my return from Prague, where I had also failed in the object of my mission.

"Poor Narbonne! he was severely mortified at the sort of disgrace into which he had fallen, though unconscious of the real cause. He begged of me to sound the Emperor on the subject. I did so. But Napoleon gave no explanation, and Narbonne departed from Torgan.

"I called to mind the last conversations I had had with Narbonne at Vienna and at Prague. He was gifted with that sort of happy temperament which enables its possessor to see only the bright side of things. He always knew how to find a pleasant point even in the most untoward events.

"Count de Narbonne's perfect elegance of manner and language, joined to his good-humored cheerfulness, and a certain *savoir faire*, rendered him a peculiar favorite in the highest circles in Vienna, and likewise had their effect in charming the Emperor. You will perhaps smile when I tell you that, in spite of his advanced age (he was then sixty), I could name more than one young and pretty woman who was not insen-

sible to the gallantry of our *vieux jeune homme.* One day at Prague, when I was complimenting him on his *bonnes fortunes*, he said—'My dear duke, at twenty, a man adores women for their own sakes, and he would load his back with the towers of Notre Dame to lay them at their feet; because men at twenty years of age are fools. At forty, we love women for our sakes; because, at forty, we grow selfish. At sixty, we do not love at all; in fact, we care nothing at all about women, except in so far as they may be useful to us; because, at sixty, men are calculators, and nothing more.'

"What an infidel you are, count, said I, laughing.

"'Not at all,' replied he, 'I am merely confessing that I am sixty years of age, and not in love. The truth is, that, in paying my court to the fair ladies of Vienna, I find opportunities of forwarding my ambassadorial interests. I do not see why I should entertain any scruples on this head; we have a right to gain an advantage over the enemy by any means in our power. I am absolutely incensed against these Austrians; their conduct is like that of savages. After the Emperor Francis has given us his daughter, they affect to treat us as *parvenus.* They are lamentably deficient in good-breeding.'

"With this sort of levity the gay Count de Narbonne treated the most serious affairs in the world. He was a diplomatist after his own fashion; and a very able one, too, I assure you.

"I shall remember as long as I live the time when he was with the army, in 1812. The Emperor wrote to Narbonne, desiring him to come and receive his instructions. We had then no quarters but such as the field of battle afforded;

and it was irresistibly droll to hear Narbonne, in his tent, lamenting the absence of all those comforts and elegancies which he had never before experienced the want of. 'Seriously,' said he, 'I cannot comprehend the possiblity of sleeping and living in these canvass apartments, open to the wind and to every intruder, and in which a man cannot even dress or undress without being observed.' To Narbonne, the business of the toilette was a most important affair; and he invariably devoted to it at least two hours every day. Whilst he was employed in adorning his person, the interior of his tent would have furnished an admirable subject for a caricaturist.

"For want of a carpet, a luxury which he regarded as indispensable, even on a field of battle, his *valet de chambre* had spread over the floor of his tent all the spare bed-covers and curtains he could collect. His table was like the counter of a perfumer's shop, covered with gallipots, scent-bottles, brushes, combs, &c., and the count, in his elegant *robe de chambre* and slippers, paced up and down with an air of ludicrous misery, venting imprecations on the inconveniences to which he was subjected. 'Tents may be all very well for military men,' said he, 'but ambassadors are quite out of their element in them. It was a strange whim of his Majesty to command my presence here.' At length, when he was dressed, powdered, and perfumed, *vaille que vaille*, to use his own expression, he would cast a last glance at his little mirror, and taking his hat and gloves from the hands of his *valet de chambre*, would sally forth from his tent to wait on his Majesty. Then the poor count was beset by new troubles, and it was the most ridiculous thing imaginable to see him in full court costume

striding over cassoons, knapsacks, and all the numberless impediments that intercepted his passage. The soldiers stared at him as though he had been some wonderful curiosity. Narbonne happened to be at that time the only man in the camp who attached any vast importance to dress and appearance! This circumstance in itself would have sufficed to render him remarkable, independently of the eccentricity of his costume, which was in every particular that of the last century. On finding himself thus the object of general observation, he would shrug his shoulders and say, 'I wish to heaven his Majesty would grant me my farewell audience. How happy should I be to make my bow.'

"I heard of the death of Count de Narbonne at the Tuileries, from the mouth of the Emperor himself. He sent for me one evening, and on my arrival I found him just concluding the perusal of a despatch. He looked dejected, and, laying the despatch on his desk, he said to me, abruptly, 'Narbonne is dead!'

"Narbonne dead! exclaimed I, with astonishment, and scarcely able to believe what I heard.

"'I am sorry, very sorry for it,' continued the Emperor. 'Narbonne was an excellent man—his honor and patriotism were of the true antique mould. He was one of those noblemen of Old France, of whom so few specimens are extant. This is a severe loss.'

"Possibly Napoleon's recollection of the injustice with which he had treated the count caused him to feel the event more keenly than he might otherwise have done. - He paced up and down the room with his hands crossed behind his back, and said—'During the last two years ill-fortune has pursued me with remarkable te-

nacity. Death has mercilessly thinned the number of my friends. Duroc, Bessières, and others, are now no more. All my most faithful and valued servants are gradually disappearing. When will fate relent?'

"The mind of Napoleon," pursued the Duke de Vicenza, "was of too elastic a temperament to remain long depressed by any event of ordinary occurrence. He could pass from one subject to another with inconceivable celerity. Thus, by a sudden transition, breaking the train of gloomy reflections which had been conjured up by the death of the Count de Narbonne, he said to me:—

"'Caulincourt, I am going to give you the portfolio of foreign affairs.'

"How, Sire?

"'A new congress is to be opened at Manheim. I mean to send you thither as my plenipotentiary. You are the man to negotiate with the sovereigns.'

"I made a gesture indicative of dissent.

"'*Parbleu!* I say you are the negotiator who will succeed best. You are to go to Manheim—therefore prepare for your departure as speedily as possible.'

"But, Sire, is there any connection between the mission which I am about to fulfil at Manheim, and my appointment to the department of foreign affairs?'

"'I will explain this matter to you. A set of dissatisfied meddling people have started a question which I wish to resolve by giving you the portfolio of foreign affairs. Maret is accused of having dissuaded me from concluding the peace for which you were negotiating at Prague. This is an egregious absurdity. But to deprive the credulous and ill-disposed of every pretext for believing this nonsense, and to drive the allies

to the wall, you are made both minister and plenipotentiary. This, I think, will satisfy them.'

"Your Majesty knows that I am entirely at your command.

"'What else can we do, Caulincourt,' interrupted he. 'If the burden be heavy to you it certainly is not light to me. We must no longer count on our strength—we must spare no efforts.'

"My appointment," continued the duke, "was ordered to be announced in the *Moniteur* before I was made acquainted with it. It appeared in that journal in the morning, and I did not quit the Tuileries until two hours after midnight. This is the way things were managed at that time. It never occurred to the Emperor that any one would hesitate to serve him at the sacrifice of any personal convenience.

"I made my preparations in the course of the day, and about ten at night I proceeded to the Tuileries, where I had a long conference with the Emperor. I begged of him to tell me whether it was his fixed intention to adhere to the last basis laid down by the Allied Powers, and which had been communicated by Prince Metternich. I urged him to give me his sincere ultimatum, that I might be enabled to close decidedly with the Allied Plenipotentiaries, who were doubtless furnished with positive instructions. The Emperor did not answer my questions categorically. He managed, with wonderful address, to veil the secret of his real designs. This was one of the striking peculiarities of Napoleon. In conversation on general topics, his interlocutor would find himself perfectly at his ease, and Napoleon maintained his share in the discussion with a grace and *bonhommie* which never failed to exercise a captivating influence. But in a

conversation on any important subject, the Emperor was cautious and reserved; he was always master of himself, and he imposed a certain degree of restraint on the person with whom he was discoursing. He seemed, as it were, to take advantage of his exalted position, and willingly, or reluctantly, his interlocutor was almost always brought over to his way of thinking.

"But at the period to which I here refer, Napoleon was struggling against a host of adverse circumstances. In pointing out this unamiable trait in his manner, I feel bound to bear evidence to the many amiable points which counterbalanced it. At Schœnbrunn and at Tilsit, where, being victorious, he might have unrestrainedly exercised his power, he was magnanimous and merciful, and he proved himself, in the strict sense of the term, a great sovereign. When at the pinnacle of his glory, he yielded to every noble and glorious inspiration—he was all-powerful, and yet he never abused his power over the conquered. Then he disdained art and dissimulation, those resources of the weak. He felt the consciousness of his greatness, and he was sincere and generous. The benefits conferred by Napoleon have been vilely forgotten. France ought to enregister them among her proudest titles of glory.

"But I am wandering from the thread of my narrative," said the duke, smiling. "I will return to it.

"The Emperor closed his last instructions to me with these remarkable words:—'I wish for peace—I wish for it without any reservation or afterthought. But, Caulincourt, I will never accede to dishonorable conditions. It is wished that peace should be based on the independence of all nations;—be it so. This is one of the Utopian

dreams of which experience will prove the fallacy. My policy is more enlightened than that of these men who are *born kings*. (This expression, so highly significant in the mouth of the *soldier of fortune*, was frequently employed by Napoleon in his moments of irritation.) Those men have never quitted their gilded cages, and have never read history, except with their tutors!' After remaining for some moments silent, he thus resumed:—'Tell them—I impress upon them, with all the authority we are entitled to exercise, that peace can be durable only inasmuch as it shall be reasonable and just towards all parties. To demand absurd concessions—to impose conditions which cannot be acceded to consistently with the dignity and importance of France, is to declare a deadly war against me. I will never consent to leave France less than I found her. Were I to do so, the whole nation *en masse* would be entitled to call me to account. Go, Caulincourt; you comprehend all the difficulties of my position you have a perfect knowledge of men and things. Depart, and Heaven grant that you may succeed!'

"Whilst I was taking leave of him, he added —'Do not spare couriers. Send me intelligence every hour. You know how anxious I shall be.'

"The negotiations of Manheim were a source of mortification and disappointment. I must, however, affirm—for I will not compromise my opinion, in deference to unjust prejudice or senseless clamor—I must affirm that I obtained countenance and assistance from the Emperor of Russia. That sovereign possessed a just and elevated mind. He wished to put it out of the power of France to injure him; but he was far from wishing her destruction. This fact is evident from his conduct in 1814. I cannot say as much

for the friendly disposition of the diplomatic agents at the congress. But Alexander was his own master, and in satisfying public feeling in Russia, which was violently roused against France, he found that he could consent to peace honorable to Napoleon.

"Our real enemies, they who had vowed our destruction, were England, Austria, and Sweden. There was a determined resolution to exterminate Napoleon, and consequently all negotiations proved fruitless. Every succeeding day gave birth to a new conflict. In proportion as we accepted what was offered, new pretensions rose up; and no sooner was one difficulty smoothed down than we had to encounter another. I know not how I mustered sufficient firmness and forbearance to remain calm amidst so many outrages.

"The bases proposed in the correspondence with Austria were nearly acceptable, though the Emperor, as I have already observed, still hesitated. I left the Tuileries with powers to treat, with the exception of some restrictions. On my arrival at the congress, Metternich, under pretext that the Emperor had not given his sanction with sufficient promptitude, withdrew his propositions, and the new conditions presented to me were ridiculous. I demanded that the points in dispute should be restored to the footing on which they stood at the time the first plan of the treaty was drawn up. As far as Russia was concerned, my demand would have been complied with; but in relation to the other coalesced powers my negotiations fell to the ground. The opinions of the committee organised in Paris for the subversion of the Imperial government, reacted like a directing power in the deliberations of the allies. The destinies of

France were in the hands of an able *coterie*, who were stimulated and encouraged by our recent defeats. France, with the wreck of her incomparable army, held out against all Europe; but treason, organised in the heart of the capital, furnished to the enemy the secret of our last means of defence, gave him the exact cypher of our squares, and indicated with atrocious precision the final term of our resistance."

"Oh! I exclaimed, indignantly, surely there is not, either in this world or the next, a punishment sufficiently severe to expiate the crimes of men who would betray their country."

"The punishment is yet to come," murmured the duke.

"I was convinced of the uselessness of my efforts, and plainly perceived the Machiavelic after-thought which protracted these lingering discussions without any intention of bringing them to a result. I accordingly wrote to the Emperor, assuring him that these conferences, pompously invested with the title of a congress, served merely to mask the irrevocably fixed determination not to treat with France; that the time we were thus losing was employed by the Allied Powers in assembling their forces for the purpose of invading us on all points at once—that by further temporising we should unavoidably augment the disadvantages of our position.

"The extraordinary levy of three hundred thousand men was then definitively determined on, and the famous declaration of Frankfort immediately made its appearance. The motive of the senatus consultum was represented by the Allies, in their incendiary proclamation, as a new provocation of the Emperor Napoleon to the

coalesced powers, with the view of enforcing peace.

"The negotiations were once more broken off, and though I had personally received at the Congress every mark of esteem and consideration, yet my mission was attended by so many unpleasant circumstances, that I could not regret its termination.

"I verily believe that no diplomatist ever found himself placed in so unpleasant a position as I was during my missions to Prague, Frankfort, and Chatillon. Two years had scarcely elapsed since the time when France laid down the law to Europe, and now it was her turn to be ruled insolently and arrogantly by those whom she had spared.

"I arrived in Paris at two in the morning, and I drove straight to the Tuileries. The Emperor had given orders that I should be conducted to him at whatever hour I might arrive. When I entered his cabinet he was dictating to his secretaries. He immediately dismissed them. As soon as they were gone he darted a scrutinising glance on me, and said, in a voice faltering with emotion:—

"'Well! you have not succeeded in bringing them to reasonable terms. They regard me as a lost man, with whom they may trifle with impunity.' As he uttered these words his contracted lips gave a fearful expression to his countenance.

"Sire, said I, the declaration of Frankfort is so explicit that there is no possibility of misunderstanding the intentions which dictated it. The deceitful assurances given to France emanate from an atrocious conspiracy. The object of the Allied Powers is to separate the cause of France from that of your Majesty.

"'But,' interrupted he, eagerly, 'the French people have too much good sense to be caught by such a bait as that. To abandon me would be to overwhelm themselves with disgrace. The interests of the country would perish in the abyss into which my subjects would hurl me.'

"Sire, in the circumstances in which we are placed I see but one resource.

"'What is it?' and then, without awaiting my reply, he added, 'Who would presume to seat himself on the throne of France after me? Who would pretend to govern a people whom twenty years of conquest have impressed with the consciousness of their own power and importance? Where is the bold adventurer, who, regardless of the future, could conceive the idea of enslaving a nation which is to be ruled only by glory? Since the 21st of January, of sanguinary memory, what can a king of France be, unless he govern by the authority of his own acts. He must be a slave, or, what is worse, *a man too much.* The impulse is given—sons are inspired by ihe recollections of their fathers. The heroic phasis of the Empire will be to the French people the palladium before which must fall all common-place mediocrity imposed by foreign domination. There is no other national spirit in France but the love of glory and the hatred of foreigners.'

"Whilst the Emperor spoke thus, he stood with his elbow resting on the mantelpiece, and one leg crossed over the other. The candelabra lighted his whole figure from head to foot, and enabled me to observe all the play of his expressive countenance. The fire of inspiration which beamed in his eyes, his animated gestures, his prophetic language altogether, presented a some-

what supernatural effect. He looked as though he had been born to rule the world. I gazed on him with a mingled feeling of admiration and sorrow. In the zenith of his glory, the hero saw tottering on every side the edifice which his own genius had raised. His courage seemed to increase with his misfortunes, and he beheld them undismayed.

"These recollections are indelible," added the Duke de Vicenza, in a tone of deep emotion. "In calling to mind the scene which I have just described, I can almost fancy I behold Napoleon before me; the inflections of his voice seem even now to vibrate in my ear.

"The Emperor remained for some moments silent, and then, as if awakening from a dream, he said:—'What is your opinion, Caulincourt? What course would you suggest?'

"Sire, replied I, it appears to me that, at the point at which affairs have arrived, your Majesty owes to the French nation a full and candid publication of the documents which were the first bases of the conferences of Manheim. It will be unsafe to conceal the bad faith of the Allied Powers, or any of the causes which render, on your Majesty's part, the conclusion of peace impossible.

"'That will not do,' said he. 'Why excite alarm and discouragement in the public mind? Besides, there is already a tendency to exaggerate the difficulties of my position.'

"Unfortunately, Sire, the reality is so bad that it scarcely admits of exaggeration. As I uttered these words he made a gesture of dissatisfaction and impatience. Our position, proceeded I, is desperate, unless by a great effort of national power the whole people voluntarily concur in the

defence of their territory. It ought to be made known to the French people that the allies refuse to treat with France. A candid declaration on the part of your Majesty would acquaint the nation with its danger, and at the same time show the resources we yet possess, and the chances of success insured to us, if we rise *en masse* in defence of our frontiers.

"'Ah baste!' said the Emperor, 'You take a chivalrous view of everything, Caulincourt. An appeal to the patriotism of the nation! Only reflect on the consequences! Doubtless such an appeal would have an electric effect; but consider the power it would throw into the hands of the plebeian class, who always play so conspicuous a part in these revolutionary movements, and who render them so dangerous. On the day after a popular victory, the throne would be the spoil of the first bold adventurer who ——'

"And yet, interrupted I, it is by the means of levies *en masse* that the Allied Powers have, in the space of a few months, driven us from their fortresses and their territories; it is with their unprepared militias that they now hem in our frontiers.

"'If you wish to form an accurate judgment of things, you must not compare the French people to any other. What has succeeded in other countries, would ruin me in France. But, at all events, in any hypothesis, I have always your scheme as a resource in the last extremity. It would be premature now.'

"Now, Sire, I exclaimed, irritated at the inconceivable blindness of the Emperor—we are now arrived at the last extremity.

"'I am not of your opinion,' said he, petulantly.'

"Has your Majesty any orders for me? said I, taking up my hat.

"He looked at me steadfastly, and then advancing to me, said, 'Caulincourt, you allow your imagination to mislead you. It is necessary to meet misfortunes coolly, or they will overcome us. I see you are fatigued; go and take some rest, and come to me again in the forenoon. We will have a little conversation before the meeting of the council.'"

CHAPTER XIII.

Napoleon's fits of ill-humor—The performance of Cleopatra—Intrigues of the Faubourg St. Germain—The female ambassador—Her mission to Mentz—Her carriage searched—The hiding place discovered—Seizure of papers and money—The clandestine printing press—Perfumed billets—Arrest of Madame La . . . .—Savary's advice—Napoleon's reluctance to punish the guilty—The allies cross the French frontier—The Emperor takes the command of the army—The conferences of Chatillon—The manuscript of 1814—The incendiary pamphlet—The continental blockade—The Emperor's plan—His blindness to his real position.

"THE clock of the Tuileries struck six," said the Duke de Vicenza, "as I closed that conversation with the Emperor which I related to you yesterday. I was much fatigued, for I had travelled from Frankfort to Paris without stopping. I never alighted from my carriage till I arrived at the Tuileries. On reaching home, I immediately threw myself on my bed to take a few hours' rest, and in the morning I again waited on the Emperor, whom I found quite restored to good humor.

"Napoleon was subject to fits of irritability. When he could not find good arguments to convince those who differed from him, he would manifest his dissent by a dry answer. If after this he was still contradicted, he would become irritated, and his anger would sometimes be carried to violent lengths. I was not of a temper to tolerate these paroxysms patiently; and therefore, whenever I found the conversation taking

an unpleasant turn, I always contrived to cut it short and to take my leave. This used to vex him exceedingly; and yet he would seldom suffer me to depart without soothing by a kind word any unpleasant feeling to which his warmth might have given rise. Then, without any further explanation, harmony was restored between us. Sometimes he would jokingly call me *Monsieur de Tufier;* but he had too much tact and dignity of mind to wish me to play the courtier to his faults.

"During the campaign of Moscow, a very sharp discussion ensued between the Emperor and me. I consequently quitted the head quarters and removed to a garret which an officer had the goodness to give up to me, together with his straw mattress. This, considering the privations of the time, was a tolerably comfortable abode. Berthier was sent by the Emperor to request me to return; but I refused, for I was resolved to relinquish those functions which brought me into personal contact with Napoleon. I even wrote to beg that he would give me a command in Spain. He sent back my letter, at the bottom of which were written, in his own hand, the following words:—'I have no wish to send you to Spain to be shot. Come and see me; I expect you.' The Emperor, as soon as he saw me, laughed, and holding out his hand, said:—'You know, Caulincourt, we are like two lovers. We cannot live apart,'

"Our misunderstanding had lasted three days. This was very long; but after that time our quarrels became much less frequent.

"About the end of 1813 the Emperor, contrary to his custom, often appeared in public, accompanied by the Empress. One evening he

attended the opera; the performance was *Cleopatra*, and it was for the benefit of Madame Grassini. The theatre was crowded, and their Majesties were vehemently applauded on their entrance. At the close of one of the acts the Emperor retired to the ante-room adjoining his box, and, without any observation to lead to the subject, he said to me:—'So, the Faubourg Saint-Germain is stirring again!—These people are quite incorrigible.' I was on my guard; and I made no reply.

"'They speak violently against me. Have you heard anything, Caulincourt?'

"No one, said I, would dare to attack your Majesty in my hearing.

"'They are intriguing with their usual stupidity; these petty *manigancurs* are not dangerous; but, nevertheless, I cannot help feeling indignant at the ingratitude of a set of people, most of whom I have extricated from misery. I restored to them their sequestrated estates; and, in compliance with their obsequious and mean supplications, I have given them appointments about my court. And here they are, like ungrateful valets, speaking all the ill they can of the master who has fed them. Really, this is odious! The fact is, I have done too much for the Faubourg Saint Germain. I will put an end to all this intriguing by and by.

"It is very certain," pursued the Duke de Vicenza," "that, if the Emperor had followed the advice then given him, which was, to send a certain personage to Vincennes, he would have done right. That traitor was the soul of all the intrigues and plots then brewing; and his long-established intimacy with almost all the members of the foreign *corps diplomatiques* gave him

very great influence. The rest of the intriguers were sufficiently ill-disposed, but they were persons without weight or importance. The Emperor thought them too insignificant to do much mischief; but he was wrong.

"A few days afterwards, on the breaking up of the council, Savary, the minister of the police, presented to the Emperor a packet of papers and a portfolio.

"'What is this!' inquired Napoleon.

"'Sire, these are proofs corroborative of the facts to which I have often, but in vain, called the attention of your Majesty.'

"The Emperor drew one of the letters from the packet, and whilst he perused it I observed a frown gather on his brow. When he had finished reading the letter, Savary related the following circumstances:—

"Madame La —— (I will not mention her name, from feelings of respect to the honorable family of which she is a member,) had been pointed out to the police as one of the most active agents of the *coterie* of the Faubourg Saint-Germain. Being a spirited and enterprising woman, she was selected by the directing committee to convey to Germany information useful to the cause for which the royalists were intriguing. It must be confessed, that admirable discernment was manifested in the choice of the messenger. Madame La —— was still young and pretty, and possessed a vast share of talent and intelligence. In addition to these powers of fascination, she was distinguished for a degree of enthusiasm and courage which it was expected would enable her to subdue any difficulties she might encounter in the fulfilment of her mission.

"I know not what pretext she set forth as the

motive of her departure from France; but, having obtained a regular passport for Mentz, the female ambassador quitted Paris about the 3d or 4th of December. She set off in an elegant *calèche*, laden with trunks filled with a choice assortment of superb dresses. This was the lady's diplomatic baggage. But who could possihave suspected any mischief? Nothing ever appeared more innocent than the lady and her journey.

"Accompanied by a confidential domestic, Madame La —— proceeded with confident security on her journey to Mentz, dreaming of parties, balls, conquests, &c. Alas! these delightful dreams were of short duration; and, on waking from them, the lady found herself surrounded by a party of gendarmes. The door of the carriage was rudely opened: and, without ceremony, Madame La —— was informed that she must alight. Tears and supplications were unavailing; the lady was compelled to obey, and the agents of the police commenced a minute search in the interior of the *calèche*. They were well convinced that something was to be found, and yet they could find nothing. Meanwhile, the lady, who was kept standing in the road shivering with cold, finding that the search was likely to prove fruitless, began to regain her courage, and ventured to utter threats. She declared her determination to complain of the shameful violation of personal liberty—her passport was perfectly *en regle*. Had the age of terror returned, that such acts of violence could be committed with impunity on a poor inoffensive female? These and a thousand similar lamentations were uttered by Madame La ——, until she was suddenly silenced by the discovery of a place of conceal-

ment which had been most ingeniously contrived at the back of the carriage. In it were found the correspondence, a portfolio containing bills of exchange on Frankfort and other places, and fifteen thousand francs in gold.

"Threats were now succeeded by tears and supplications, accompanied by offers of large rewards to the gendarmes. The lady's distress might have melted hearts of stone; but the gendarmes were insensible, and, above all, incorruptible. Madame La —— found that there was no alternative but to return to Paris in company with three *sbirri*, who very cavalierly seated themselves in the carriage with the fair traveller. At day-break the equipage entered the court-yard of the minister of the police. The papers, &c., were taken from their hiding place, and verified in the presence of the lady, who, after a long examination, was, together, with her servant, consigned to a place of security.

"The contents of the papers were exceedingly curious. They proved that, however active might be the vigilance of the police, there was still a possibility of eluding it. We read several proclamations, printed at Sceaux, by a press which had been clandestinely fitted up in the cellars of a chateau belonging to a M. Lamy. The information was very carefully drawn up, and presented a perfectly correct picture of the state of France. The impression produced on the public mind by the levy of the three hundred thousand men was described—mention was made of the misery of the working classes, the distressed state of agriculture, and the stagnation of trade, which excited general discontent. A great deal was said respecting the diminished popularity of the Emperor since his reverses, and the disaffection

openly manifested towards him. The conclusion was, that the French people looked to the Allies as their liberators, and earnestly prayed for their arrival.

"There were numerous little perfumed billets, sealed with crests, and addressed to the Count de Saint Priest. Their contents were appeals to old relationship or friendship, and entreaties that the count would use his influence with his Majesty the Emperor of Russia. Every arrangement was said to have been made for seconding the Allies in their generous enterprise. Agents were established in all the principal towns of France to facilitate the entrance of the invaders.

"Many other letters witten in the same spirit, were addressed to foreign diplomatists; and among the papers there were documents obtained, I know not how, from the ministers of the war department and the interior. This seizure was very important, and it gave rise to serious alarm. We were lost in conjecture as to the means by which the legitimists had procured certain information; there now seemed every reason to apprehend that they might renew, with better success, the attempt which had recently failed.

"The Emperor inquired whether every precaution had been taken for keeping the arrest of Madame La —— a secret. Savary replied, that the servant and the postilion, the only individuals who had witnessed the arrest, were lodged in a place of security, so that there was no possibility of the affair becoming known.

"Savary urged the Emperor to adopt measures for putting a stop to these plots against his government. The removal of some of the ring-leaders of these dangerous conspiracies would have sufficed to awe the rest. None of the cri-

minals cherished a grateful remembrance of Napoleon's magnanimity. The Emperor might on this occasion have made a terrible example; but he disdained revenge.

"After Savary's departure he read over most of the documents, and truly their contents were of a nature to irritate him. He uttered a few indignant exclamations, but did not evince any violent anger. He threw some of the papers into the fire, and placed the rest in a drawer of his desk. He appeared much grieved; and, after a few moments' silence, he said to me:—'Caulincourt, could you have conceived such atrocity?'

"Napoleon was always averse to punish; he never, without deep regret, inflicted punishment on persons whom he had known. During the space of a few months so many illusions had vanished, and he had witnessed so much deception, that he became almost indifferent to the injuries of which he was the object. He felt the necessity of summoning all his energies to meet the great events that were impending, and he could not bend his mind to little things. I likewise remarked that his habitual petulance had given place, on many occasions, to a calmness which was not natural to him. It might be that his physical organisation was beginning to sink beneath the exhausting efforts of every kind to which he had been exposed.

"Every successive day brought some disastrous intelligence to add to the embarrassment of our situation. The fortresses which we still defended in Germany were escaping from us one by one; and thus we were losing men, ammunition, provisions, and valuable resources of every description, which went to enrich the enemy.

The levy of three hundred thousand men was easily effected; but we were pressed for time. It was now December, and the Allies were advancing by forced marches. On the 1st of January, 1814, they crossed the French frontiers.

"The Emperor said no more to me respecting my proposition of appealing to the French people, nevertheless, I am still of opinion that this was the only measure that could have averted our ruin. National intelligence must have perceived that the simultaneous concurrence of all in the common defence would ensure to every man the inviolability of his home, and the preservation of his property. The foreign powers could not have effected their invasion in defiance of armed France. How often, during this terrible period of the campaign of 1814, did the words used by Napoleon at Duben recur to my memory—*'Fate decrees the fall of nations!'* We now saw this axiom fearfully verified.

"In obedience to the Emperor's orders, I departed, at the beginning of January, for the head quarters of the Allies, where new and useless negotiations were opened. I have already spoken to you of the Congress of Châtillon, and I really have not courage to turn back to that gloomy page of my recollections. It was, I think, on the 25th, that the Emperor quitted the capital to place himself at the head of the army, which had already fallen back to Saint-Dizier.

"Then commenced that miraculous campaign in which the genius of Napoleon shone with immortal lustre. Never did troops execute more scientific manœuvres, or display greater prodigies of valor. In the campaign of France were renewed the wonders which marked Napoleon's

heroic career in Italy. The close of the Emperor's military life exhibits the most extraordinary defence recorded in the annals of war.

"I rejoined the Emperor at Saint-Dizier, after the rupture of the conference, and I was very glad to find myself again at head quarters. I cannot attempt to describe the misery I suffered during the negotiations at Châtillon. I could obtain only evasive answers, at a time when it was incumbent on me to treat at any sacrifice. The veil of illusion was raised, and the reality was visible in all its horror. But even then we might look forward to the future—now, the grave is all that remains."

"The letters, duke," said I, "which you wrote at the time you are now alluding to, will remain a lasting monument of your efforts and courage. Baron Fain's 'Manuscrit de 1814,' devotes to you some fine pages in the history of our misfortunes."

"My letters present but a faint outline of the sentiments I expressed in my private conversations with the Emperor. On the eve of my departure from Châtillon I returned home, weary of those eternal conferences in which the bad faith and bad spirit of the Allies were but too manifest. The ground was no longer tenable. I found it necessary that I should communicate personally with the Emperor, and I gave orders for my departure.

"With a mind harassed and unfitted for occupation, I threw myself on a sofa. I was unable to sleep, and I had fallen into a train of melancholy reveries, from which I was aroused by the sound of the rustling of paper. Turning my eyes in the direction whence the sound proceeded, I perceived a pamphlet, which some one was

thrusting under the door. Who is there? said I; an emphatic *hush!* warned me to be silent. I rose eagerly, seized the pamphlet, and I heard the footsteps of the person recede from the door.—The moon was shining brightly. I went to the window, and, drawing aside the curtain, I perceived a young man, wrapped in a cloak, and with his hat drawn down over his forehead. He crossed the court yard at a rapid pace; but before he passed through the gate leading to the street, he stopped, and turning his eyes towards the window of my cabinet, he placed his finger on his lip, and disappeared.

"By the tall figure of the stranger, and his fair curled hair, I immediately recognised one of the secretaries of the Russian Embassy. Alexander is no more, and I will not name the young secretary, for fear of compromising him.

"The pamphlet which was thus mysteriously conveyed to me had been brought to Châtillon on the preceding night by an extraordinary courier; and a copy had been presented to each Ambassador. It was entitled—'*De la necessité de renverser Bonaparte, et de retablir les Bourbons, par le Lieutenant-Colonel du génie de Brichambault.*'

"This libel, emanating from the pen of a French officer, was calculated to produce a great effect on the Allied Sovereigns, by directing their attention to the consequences so speciously pointed out. There was a diabolical Machiavelism in the idea of conjuring up before the eyes of the sovereigns the fearful phantom of a universal republic, and representing it as a necessity which Napoleon would not scruple to employ for the purpose of tempting the French people to pardon a dishonorable peace. To this libel were joined state-

ments and calculations relating to the actual force of the army, its state of moral discouragement, &c.

"Safely entrenched in the midst of the enemy's camp, the author, a French officer, disgraced by the Emperor, and exiled to Nancy, had basely kindled this torch of revenge on his country.

"The perfidious insinuation presented to the Holy Alliance, was of a nature to exercise great influence on the final determination of the sovereigns, and it in some degree justified their implacable resentment. This pamphlet was an affair of the utmost importance, and I felt anxious and impatient to make the Emperor acquainted with it; I therefore hurried my departure from Châtillon. I set out on the 20th of March, and, after numberless circuits, I arrived on the 23d at Saint-Dizier, where the Imperial head quarters were established.

"When I entered the Emperor's cabinet, I found him dictating orders; three secretaries were employed in writing for him.

"'Ah!' he exclaimed, fixing his keen glance upon me. 'Leave us, gentlemen. Well, Caulincourt, what news have you?'

"He knew of the rupture of the conferences, but he did not expect to see me quite so soon. Without uttering a word, I presented the pamphlet to him. I attentively observed the expression of his countenance whilst he glanced over it. His features became contracted, and his lips were agitated by that sort of convulsive movement peculiar to him when his feelings were powerfully excited. He read the pamphlet to the very last line, and turned back to peruse again some passages which he had marked with his nail. When he had finished, he threw it

down on the desk near which he had been sitting, and, rising from his chair, he paced rapidly up and down the room. Then, stopping short, and his eyes flashing with rage, he said: 'This is an infernal production. The diabolical idea of reviving the name of the republic may have an incalculable effect. It will afford the Allies a powerful reason for concluding neither truce nor peace with France. The question becomes an affair of life and death to every sovereign. A lever is raised which will descend with terrific weight on France. The republic! the republic! As a last resource,' added he, in a more calm tone, 'it might, perhaps, be tried; but, in present circumstances, this suggestion is a serious misfortune—a crime. Caulincourt, the author of this libel deserves the severest punishment. Do you know what effect it has produced? Where did you get it?—how did it fall into your hands?'

"Sire, it came to me from the only quarter in which there exists sympathy or good faith to your Majesty; and I related the mysterious visit of the secretary to the Russian embassy.

"'Bah!—are you sure of this? Quite sure, Caulincourt?' and then, without awaiting my reply, he continued. 'But yes! I know him well! He has a noble, generous heart. He did not understand me. It was necessary to sacrifice everything—everything for the maintenance of the continental blockade. Caulincourt, the Emperor Alexander did not look to the future.'

"Nay, Sire, said I, impelled by a sense of justice to refute this allegation; the Emperor Alexander perfectly well understood the consequences of the continental blockade, had it been executed in good faith. That system, which would temporarily have ruined Russia, was en-

durable only so long as France, by fidelity to her engagements, concurred in abridging its duration. Instead of that, we violated our pledges by granting licences ——

"'Ah! there you are again, at the old story of the licences. No more of that. Come hither, Caulincourt,' said he, beckoning me to approach a table on which were spread several maps of France. With the aid of his pins, he described to me in a few words, an admirable plan of the respective positions of the contending parties, the places occupied, the movements of the armies, and their relative force.

"'I was at work last night with Dalbe,' pursued he, 'I have got all my plans arranged here (tapping his forehead)—I still possess immense resources. My troops are admirable. What a brave nation are the French! I will accept no humiliating conditions. No, I will never bend my neck to them; we have not yet come to that extremity. But tell me, what effect do you think this vile pamphlet has produced?'

"The effect is sufficiently apparent from the circumstances which have brought about the rupture of the conferences.

"He again walked up and down the room. 'Sit down, Caulincourt,' said he; 'never mind me; you know I cannot rest in one place. So they flatter themselves that they can impose still harder conditions on me! But I can tell them now that I will not condeseend to treat with prisoners. Yes, I say, with prisoners! Do you understand me, Caulincourt?'

"Convinced as I was of the utter hopelessness of our position, and amazed at the incredible blindness of the Emperor, I described to him in energetic terms the deplorable state of France—

the exhaustion of the country, which was invaded on every side—and the evident discouragement of the commanders of the army.

"'Is it for the sake of calumniating the army that you have deserted your friends, Caulincourt?' said the Emperor, and as he spoke he stood before me with his arms crossed, his head reared, and with an angry expression of countenance.

"I could not bear this. I took up my hat, and, after a difficult struggle with my feelings, I summoned all my resolution, and rushed towards the door.

"He held me back by the skirt of my coat. 'Where are you going? Nonsense. What a couple of fools we are. It is four o'clock. I am tired, and so are you, my dear Caulincourt.'—Then stretching out his hand to me, with an air of languor, he added—'I will try and sleep for two hours. Go you and take some rest, and come to breakfast with me to-morrow.'

"I cannot, Sire; I beg of your Majesty to grant me a *congé*.

"'No, Caulincourt, I will not—you must not—you ought not to leave me—I need your aid, my friend. This is not the time to forsake me!'"

CHAPTER XIV.

The battle of Arcis-sur-Aube—Anecdote related by Colonel Mondreville—Napoleon's sword—Scheme for capturing the Emperor of Austria—The defence of Paris—a well-conceived plan—Berthier—Maria Louisa and Maria Theresa—Angry scene between the Emperor and the Duke de Belluno—Letter from Wintzingerode to the Emperor Alexander—Courage of the French peasantry—Error committed by Marmont—Dangers incurred by Napoleon at Arcis-sur-Aube—He seeks death on the field of battle—Engagement at St. Dizier—The Allies hold a council—Orders for marching to Paris—Distinguished prisoners—M. M. Weissemberg and Tolstoi—Danger of the Emperor Francis—Intelligence of the evacuation of Paris—The Emperor's distress—The Duke de Vicenza sent to Paris—Napoleon proceeds to Fontainebleau.

"THE Emperor was surrounded by men distinguished for heroic courage and fidelity; and, notwithstanding the adverse aspect of affairs, every partial victory which we obtained revived hope and confidence. I arrived at head quarters just after the battle of Arcis-sur-Aube. A general feeling of joy and enthusiasm prevailed, and the details of the battle were repeated from mouth to mouth.

"The following anecdote was related to me by Colonel Mondreville, a brave and excellent officer, then at head quarters:—

"'During the heat of the battle, a division of Russian cavalry, about 6,000 strong, preceded by a body of Cossacks, broke our lines and drove back our cavalry, which was of inferior force. The Emperor, whose glance rapidly surveyed

every movement of the battle, perceived an impenetrable cloud of dust rising before him so densely that, nothing beyond it was visible. He immediately proceeded to the spot. Some horsemen rode up at full speed—some wounded, others terrified. In a moment, a crowd of troopers in full retreat surrounded the Emperor. "What means this?" said he. "What means this? Dragoons, whither are you flying? Halt, halt!" —"The Cossacks! the Cossacks!" was the only cry; and the tumult was becoming almost a complete route.

"'At this moment an officer without a helmet, and covered with blood, rode up, and perceiving the Emperor, rushed towards him. "Sire," said he, "the Cossacks, supported by an immense body of cavalry, have broken our ranks and driven us back." The Emperor, instantly raising himself up in his stirrups, called out in a voice of thunder, "Dragoons, rally! Do you fly, and I here? Close your ranks, dragoons, and advance." At the same moment he darted forward, sword in hand, in front of a cloud of Cossacks. He was followed by his staff, by some of his body guards, and by those very men who an instant before were flying in confusion and terror. In a moment they dashed on the enemy with cries of "*Vive l'Empereur.*" The Russian column was driven back, and pursued with great slaughter. Immediately after this the Emperor returned tranquilly to the midst of the battle, which he continued to direct till its close. During this partial engagement we had not more than a thousand horse to oppose to six thousand Russians, much better mounted, yet it was at the head of the wreck of a troop of dragoons that the Em-

peror ventured to repel this superior force, and he succeeded.

"'The battle was not over till midnight, but we were not able to snatch a victory. The French on this occasion combatted with six thousand exhausted men, against thirty thousand fresh troops, commanded by De Wrede.'

"I had no recollection of any instance in which I had seen Napoleon engaged sword in hand, and I afterwards mentioned to him the affair of Arcis-sur-Aube. He looked at me with astonishment —'Ma foi,' said he laughing, 'it is a long time since any thing of that kind occurred to me. By the way, I now recollect that I had some difficulty in getting at my scabbard to get out my weapon,' and he laughed heartily at his own awkwardness; 'but,' he added, good humoredly, 'the fact is, that my redoubtable sword is one of the worst blades in the whole army.' We laughed at this; but it was true. One of the whims of the Emperor was that he would not have a new hilt substituted for the shabby mother-o'-pearl one. Not an officer in the army would have worn such a sword.

"This conversation put him into good humor; and taking my arm, he drew me aside, and said, 'You are not aware that I made an attempt to carry off my father-in-law! That would have been a glorious capture! I have manœuvred incessantly to take the head quarters of the allies; that would have greatly advanced our affairs at Châtillon. What do you say to it, Caulincourt? —(Here his countenance darkened.) But I was teased on all sides to cover Paris!—To cover Paris! I know that is essential; but I thus lost the opportunity of effecting all my other intended operations. By abandoning Paris to its own defence, I should be master of my own movements

—nothing could hinder my march to the Rhine —uniting its garrisons with those of the Moselle —organising on that whole line *your* levy en masse—shutting up the roads, and thus cutting off the communications of the enemy's forces engaged in the heart of France.' He paused for a few moments, pensively, then added, 'Since the opening of this campaign, this scheme has been constantly in my thoughts—I have matured it—developed it—my plan is fixed. What is your opinion, Caulincourt?'

"Sire, the plan certainly appears well-digested—

"'But to carry it into effect,' interrupted the Emperor, eagerly, 'Paris must be abandoned—what will Joseph do? Will he resist with energy? That is the whole question. My head is filled with a thousand plans, but I am checked by uncertainty; and in this war, which resembles no other, I go on thus from day to day. The accounts which I receive from Paris are most alarming. I know not what may be the result.'

"In the evening Berthier came to my quarters: I had a thousand things to ask him as to what had occurred during my absence; and he, whose heart was sad and heavy, sought a friend to whom he could unbosom himself. We were, therefore, glad to find ourselves together. Berthier was then getting old; the fatigues of the campaign seemed to have overcome him.

"Berthier confirmed the opinion I had formed as to the real cause of the Emperor's indecision during the negotiations at Châtillon. 'There is no doubt,' said he, 'that those alternate victories and reverses produced in the Emperor that fluctuation of ideas which rendered your position at Châtillon so difficult during the conferences. The

Emperor still reposed faith in the good feeling of Austria, if not towards him, at least towards his wife and son. This error will be our ruin. Letters after letters were, by his desire, written by the Empress to her father. You know Maria Louisa is a complete nullity; she is not another Maria Theresa, who would energetically declare her determination to defend the capital, and that rather than deliver it up she would bury herself and its faithful inhabitants under the ruins, as long as the Emperor should maintain the war at the head of his army. That Austrian marriage has brought misfortune to us,' added Berthier, with a sigh.

"Berthier described to me a scene which took place between the Emperor and the Duke de Belluno, after the battle of Montereau, where we gained a victory at the expense of so much blood. 'If you had executed my orders on the preceding day,' said the Emperor to the Duke de Belluno, 'you would have arrived in time to surprise the bridge, and possibly this sanguinary affair at Montereau might have been obviated.' 'I was so exhausted by fatigue that I found it impossible to proceed as you directed,' replied the marshal, who unfortunately had no better excuse to offer. On hearing this reply, the Emperor stood for some moments mute with astonishment, and he then vented a most angry reprimand on the Duke de Belluno.

"'After all,' pursued Berthier, 'there are moments when a man's strength may betray his courage. We all know that Victor is brave and devoted; but the Emperor is indefatigable, and he cannot understand that every one is not constituted like himself. However, harmony was restored, but poor Victor is greatly afflicted.'

"'On the morning of the 19th or 20th of Feb-

ruary,' Berthier continued, 'the Emperor breakfasted at Bray, near Nogent, at the same house which the Emperor of Russia had quitted on the preceding evening. We there found a curious letter, which had been left by mistake on the chimney-piece. The letter was from Wintzingerode, who informed the Emperor Alexander that the country people could not safely be relied on —that the French peasantry had commenced an active guerilla warfare against the allied troops. "This very night," added Wintzingerode, 'an officer and twenty Russian soldiers were massacred within two leagues from the camp." Wintzingerode called Alexander's attention to the fact, that for some days past, many similar cases had occurred.'

"'*Parbleu!*' said the Emperor, putting the letter into his pocket, 'this information is beyond suspicion. If we are thus seconded by these brave peasantry, it may come to pass that not a man of the Allied forces shall quit France. The French are born soldiers. By arming the country people, and organising the peasantry in free corps, we should have immense resources.'

"Berthier went on to state 'that the Duke de Ragusa had acted admirably in this campaign, and obtained brilliant success in several actions; but at Corbeny he had allowed himself to be surprised in his bivouac. His division was cut to pieces; two thousand men were killed; his artillery and baggage were almost wholly lost, and he was, with the remnant, obliged to repass the Aisne with the enemy at his heels.'

"'Well,' added Berthier, 'you know the Emperor would consider himself justified in running his sword through the body of any commander who could allow himself to be surprised

in that manner. The Emperor reproached him in the severest terms, but such is his partiality for Marmont, that he was soon appeased and continued him in his command. Belluno was much more severely treated for a less serious fault.'

"We again adverted to the battle of Arcis-sur-Aube.

"'I have reason to believe,' said Berthier, 'that the Emperor sought death in that battle.'

"How? cried I.

"'I am convinced,' replied he, 'that it was his earnest wish to be killed that day. Alarmed by the dangers which the Emperor encountered, his staff and body-guard advanced and kept quite close round him; but every now and then he separated from them, and advanced toward the enemy. Alarmed at his intention, which I at once understood, I ventured to observe that in the position in which he then stood he was terribly exposed, and served as a mark to the enemy. "I am very well here," said he, drily. It was only when, as I just now described to you, he rushed forward sword in hand in front of the Cossacks that he quitted that dangerous position. At this period of the engagement he became several times involved in the whirlwind of the charges. His escort could not keep up with him. A howitzer-shell fell at his feet, and he was instantly lost sight of in a cloud of dust and smoke. A cry of terror arose from all parts. He was given over as lost. He soon reappeared, and, throwing himself on a fresh horse, he placed himself under the fire of a battery, which several battalions of the old and young guards were striving in vain to carry. The presence of the Emperor in the midst of them, and the dangers to which he exposed himself, electrified those

brave fellows. They redoubled their efforts, and at last forced the position, and drove back the enemy, but not until they lost more than 400 of their comrades. It is impossible to describe this scene of carnage. The appearance of the dead was most hideous. My dear Caulincourt,' added Berthier, much affected, 'the Emperor wished to get killed at Arcis-sur-Aube.'

"This was a painful subject, but nevertheless I closely questioned Berthier upon it. We did not separate till day-light.

"On the day after my return," continued the Duke de Vicenza, "I resumed, under the dictation of the Emperor, my correspondence with Metternich. We had a serious affair on the 26th at St. Dizier. Wintzingerode was beaten, and driven across the Marne. We took 2,000 prisoners, a park of artillery, and a considerable quantity of bridge equipage likewise fell into our hands. The prisoners, however, only embarrassed us, for we did not know what to do with, or where to send them. This was another useless victory; but these partial advantages continued to feed in Napoleon's mind the hope of obtaining peace on less rigorous conditions. Fatal confidence!

"After the battle of St. Dizier, the Emperor lost sight for a moment of the march of the Allies, and his uneasiness about the condition of the capital returned. We arrived on the evening of the 27th at Vitry. There we obtained some intelligence from the statements of prisoners, and the accounts of our troops who had escaped from the hands of the enemy. Some of the peasants of Vitry brought us proclamations and bulletins. These left us no longer in doubt as to the movements of the Allies. They were marching on Paris. An officer arrived at our head-quarters;

he was wounded, and had escaped by a miracle from the enemy, by whom he had been made prisoner. He understood the Russian language perfectly, and he informed us that a doubt had arisen amongst the Allies, in a council held recently, whether they should continne to harass the army under Napoleon, or at all hazards advance on Paris. The Emperor Alexander feared an 'Imperial Vendean rising.' The Allies spoke of retiring on the Rhine, and the junction of all their forces was necessary either for an advance or a retreat.

"Oh!" said the duke, "if at this moment the Emperor had made reasonable offers, there would have been some chance of their being accepted, and we might have been saved. But how was this to be foreseen?

"The officer added, 'that the council separated without coming to any decision; but, during the night, a secret emissary, sent from Paris, had an interview with the Emperor of Russia. At day-break the council was again re-assembled. The intelligence that Alexander had received put an end to all irresolution. It was announced that a powerful party awaited the arrival of the Allies in the capital: that Paris was without the means of defence, without order, and stripped of her troops, and that the Allied Powers might enter without striking a blow.

"The Emperor listened to these details with a mournful air: and when the officer ceased speaking, he exclaimed, 'I shall be in Paris before them.' We returned to St. Dizier. The Emperor passed the whole night shut up in his cabinet perusing his maps. This was another cruel night. Not a word was uttered. Deep sighs sometimes escaped from his oppressed

bosom. He seemed as if he had lost the power of breathing. Good Heaven! how much he suffered!

"Orders for our departure were given," continued the duke, "and we moved on by the way of Doulevent to Troyes. Just as the Emperor was mounting his horse, some peasants arrived, bringing with them cars filled with prisoners, whose carriages had been seized by the inhabitants of St. Thibaut. Amongst the prisoners was M. de Weissemberg, the ambassador from Austria to England, who had been summoned to the head-quarters of the Allies; also a Swedish general, named Brandt, a *conseiller de guerre*, whose name I forget, and two Russian officers, MM. Tolstoi and Marcoff.

"I had known Tolstoi and his family at St. Petersburg. In the midst of my troubles it was some relief to recal the happy days passed with him during my embassy to Russia. Tolstoi, who was gay, young, and frank, said to me, 'My dear duke, I am in raptures with France. I am all anxiety to see Paris.' Hold, me dear friend, said I, you sting me to the very heart—remember, you are speaking to a Frenchman. But nothing could prevent him from expressing the joy he felt in visiting France. His companion, Marcoff, was much more reserved, and also much less agreeable.

"The prisoners must have considered themselves very fortunate that their lucky stars had brought them to the Emperor, who treated them very well. He took no other advantage of their arrival, than that of attempting a direct communication to his father-in-law. M. de Weissemberg, after a long interview, departed with a message to the Emperor of Austria. Napoleon ordered

the portfolios and despatches belonging to the prisoners to be delivered up to them, and charged me to procure them horses, and to see that they were provided with safe conducts. Tolstoi embraced me, and throwing himself on his horse, went off in his usual light and joyous manner. How different had been our fortune since we met at St. Petersburg! I saw him again in Paris, where he did every thing in his power to oblige me. Alexander learnt from Tolstoi all the details of the interview of the prisoners with Napoleon.

"By some fatality, the Emperor Francis was separated from the head quarters, and he narrowly escaped being taken. He got on the road to Dijon, where he eventually arrived. M. de Weissemberg consequently did not know where to rejoin him. In the meantime, the fatal *denouement* approached. Napoleon, attacked on all sides, definitively abandoned his project of marching with his forces on the Rhine, and manœuvred to cover Paris. The enemy continued to advance by forced marches on the capital. In order to prevent the junction of the several corps of the allies, to disseminate their forces, and to continue our advance to Paris, we had to sustain a combat every day. The fighting might be said to be continuous. The ardor and devotedness of the troops seemed to increase with the danger, and they seemed indefatigable. The heart beats at the remembrance of the heroism displayed in the last days of the crisis.

"On the 30th of March we were at Troyes. The Emperor traced out the route of the army, so that on the 2d of April the whole should unite before Paris. At ten o'clock he set out, accompanied by Berthier and myself. We made the

journey from Troyes to Montereau, a distance of ten leagues, in two hours. A crazy vehicle, drawn by two horses, which were kept at full gallop, brought us across some fields on the road to Paris, between Essonne and Villejuif. Whilst waiting for our relays we saw some disbanded troops, who had, they said, evacuated Paris in the evening after the capitulation. It was then ten at night. 'These people are mad,' said the Emperor. He descended from his carriage, and ordered that an officer should come to him. At that moment Belliard arrived, who announced the taking of Paris, and gave him all the details which led to that event. Large drops of perspiration rolled down the forehead of the Emperor. His mouth became contracted, and the livid paleness of his face was frightful. 'You hear this, Caulincourt,' said he, turning towards me, his eyes fixed on mine with horrible intensity. He wished to march on Paris with the armies of the two marshals, who had received his orders at Troyes. 'The guard,' he said, 'will arrive on the night of the 31st.' He wished to make an attack on the Boulevards at the moment of the entrance of the Allied Sovereigns. 'The national guard and the people will support me,' added he, 'and when I shall enter within the walls of Paris, I will not quit them except as a conqueror or a corpse.' Soon after there successively arrived, the guards of honor, the commanders of corps, and the general officers who had concurred in the defence of Paris, under the orders of Marmont. It sickens me to pronounce this name," added the duke, in a sorrowing accent. "The Emperor, continually standing, constantly repeated to himself those dreadful details which preyed upon him. He then loudly announced his intention of marching

on Paris. It was suggested to him that that would be a violation of the capitulation, in virtue of which the troops had evacuated the capital; that these troops were few in number, and greatly harassed; that four thousand men had fallen under the walls of Paris; and that if that bold enterprise failed, the city would be given up to pillage, to fire, and sword.

"All these reasons were plausible, no doubt; but it is a melancholy truth, that none of the advice given was disinterested. Each person gave his advice from selfish calculations. The human heart contains many foul recesses.

"The Emperor was not deceived as to the motives which influenced his counsellors. 'Enough,' said he, drily. He then ordered that the corps of Mortier and Marmont should take up a position behind the river Essonne: then, turning towards me, he said, 'Do you set off at full speed to Paris, Caulincourt, and see if it be yet possible to do anything by treaty. I am delivered up and sold; but no matter. Depart this instant; I give you full powers, and I await you here—go. The distance is not great,' added he, with a deep sigh; 'go.'

"The Emperor was separated only by the Seine from the advanced posts of the enemy, whose forces were spread over the plains of Villeneuve Saint-Georges. The fires of their bivouacs, illumined the right bank, while Napoleon remained in darkness on the opposite side, with two post carriages and some servants.

"I rode with excessive speed, and I felt an extraordinary sensation within me. My horse had the swiftness of the wind, and it almost seemed to me that I carried him. I arrived too soon at the advanced posts to learn that all was lost—that

the ruin of France was consummated, and that the fate of the Emperor was at the mercy of wretches, who, as he had just said, had delivered him up and sold him.

"From a miserable road-side inn, already occupied by Russians and Prussians, I forwarded him an express. A feverish anxiety seized me, when I thought of the despair into which my letter would plunge him. I immediately mounted the first horse I could get, and rejoined the Emperor at the moment he had finished reading my despatch. We conversed for some moments. 'I only asked them,' said Napoleon, 'to defend Paris for twenty-four hours longer—the traitors!—Marmont—Marmont, who had sworn that he would allow himself to be cut to pieces under the walls of Paris rather than surrender!—and Joseph flying!—my brother to deliver up my capital to the enemy! They had my orders; they knew that on the 2d of April I should be at the head of seventy thousand men; my brave military schools and my national-guards, who had promised to defend my son. Every man of courage would have been at my side. The traitors have capitulated—they have betrayed their brethren in arms, their country, and their sovereign—they have degraded France in the eyes of all Europe. To enter a capital with a population of eight hundred thousand souls, and without striking a blow!'

"The Emperor seemed plunged in the most profound grief. I was deeply affected, and burning tears overflowed my eyes.

"'My dear Caulincourt, return—return to head quarters, and try to see the Emperor Alexander. You have full powers from me. Go, Caulincourt, go.'

"Sire,' answered I, I have not been able even

to come near Alexander. They distrust me. The sovereigns will enter Paris to-morrow, and they are now busied with preparations for that event. These are the reasons assigned for refusing me permission to approach the Emperor Alexander.

"'Return—I have now no hope but in you, Caulincourt,' continued he, holding out his hand.

"I go, Sire—dead or alive I will gain entrance into Paris, and will speak to the Emperor Alexander.

"The Emperor then took the road to Fontainebleau, and I repaired to Paris. I will tell you how he fulfilled that mission; it is very curious. My head is burning," said the duke, raising his hand to his forehead. "I am quite feverish. I should live a hundred years before I could forget these scenes. They are the fixed ideas of my sleepless nights. My reminiscences are frightful —they kill me. To-morrow, if I can, I will describe to you those twenty days of torture passed at Paris or at Fontainebleau. The repose of the tomb is sweet after such sufferings."

END OF VOL. I.

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